

# Together we are powerful



# Introduction

**Elizabeth Kuiper, Emma Woodford, Corina Stratulat**

This year's International Women's Day (IWD) takes place in a global context where gender equality seems more contested than ever. This is particularly striking in the US government's recent policies on diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as similar negative developments in many parts of Europe.

Adverse times call for strong resolve and *esprit de corps*. That is why this year's IWD compendium is dedicated to unity and allyship. Moreover, for the first time since its launch, this edition includes contributions from men, adding their voices to the call for intersectional equity.

An incredibly diverse group of people have shared their observations, beliefs and ideas on gender equality and diversity in 2025. The scope of this publication is also incredibly broad, encompassing a wide range of topics such as women's representation in civil society and

politics, economic and social inequality, the current state of social justice, and the struggles of indigenous women and decolonial feminism.

A common thread that runs through these contributions is the importance of coming together with hope and determination to defend intersectional equality. The variety of styles used is equally impressive, ranging from poetry and forward-looking predictive scenarios filled with joy, to policy recommendations. Many of the contributions are personal reflections, adding unique and intimate perspectives to the publication.

At a critical point in time, when some appear to want us to give up and give in, the voices that we amplify through this publication are a powerful testament to the courage, strength and passion of those who fight for equality.





**Ana Berdzenishvili**  
Junior Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I stand alongside my country, Georgia, in the fight for democracy, where the voices of women have become the backbone of resistance. For over 70 days, they have braved the streets, facing water cannons, police violence and tear gas, not as passive participants but as leaders, unbowed, unapologetic and unwavering in their demand for justice. Their fight is not just for themselves but for the future of an entire nation, as they tear down systems that have long perpetuated inequality and repression.

The moment is not without precedent. The women leading Georgia's protests inherit a deep legacy of resilience. In the 12th century, 'King of Kings' Tamar defied expectations, not only ruling but transforming Georgia into one of the most powerful kingdoms of its time. Her strength was not in wielding power alone, but in uniting people behind a vision of progress and prosperity. That same vigour reverberates through the

streets today, carried forth by women who refuse to surrender their future to fear.

For me, this legacy is deeply personal. The fight for justice, the courage to stand up and the refusal to yield are not just abstract ideals - they are woven into my family's story. My grandmother fled from South Ossetia during times of political turmoil - now an occupied state. She taught me that resilience is not just about survival but shaping the world for those who come after.

As the world celebrates International Women's Day, I am reminded that change has always been driven by those who refuse to stand still. In Georgia, in my family and across the world, women are not just fighting for a better future. They are forging it with their own hands, proving that women themselves are the force of unity, defiance, and hope that drives change.



**Arnaldo Mina Mendoza**  
Operations Officer at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I envision a world where the principles of gender equality, human rights and democracy are not mere ideals, but tangible realities that shape our social fabric. Every step we take towards a more inclusive and diverse society leaves a lasting imprint, steering the course of our shared future.

Imagine a world where individuals, regardless of gender, ethnicity or race, can enter any space and feel not only safe but also empowered. A world where diversity is not an exception but the essence of our social interactions. Where everyone can find a sense of belonging, valued for their inherent humanity. This is the future I strive for - a society where identity does not define worth, but where every person's humanity is recognised and upheld.

As we navigate an increasingly polarised world, with far-right ideologies gaining ground, we must remain resolute in our pursuit of equality. The struggle for gender equality is more urgent than ever. However, this issue extends far beyond gender. Minorities and historically marginalised

groups continue to face systemic barriers, inhibiting their potential and perpetuating cycles of exclusion. At this critical moment, we must stand firm in our collective commitment to diversity and inclusion.

As a Latino Afro-descendant from Ecuador, pursuing my dreams in Brussels, I am deeply aware of the transformative power of this fight. On this International Women's Day, I reaffirm my dedication to fostering a more just and equitable world, where every action and every voice contributes to the dismantling of inequalities.

I aspire to a future where individuals like myself are no longer outliers in positions of influence and leadership. A future where the next generation can look to these figures and say, "That is my inspiration."

With collective power, we can redefine the future. In 2025, equality is not just a right, but the force that underpins a just and resilient world.



## Dr Audrey-Flore Ngomsik

CEO, Trianon Scientific Communication and President, Brussels Binder

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With a PhD in physical and analytical chemistry, I couldn't help but wonder if the saying "Together we are stronger" is truly applicable to all situations.

Stable structures are formed between negatively charged particles, known as anions, and positively charged particles, known as cations, to form a neutral whole. This unity reflects collaborative human endeavours, where a range of abilities and viewpoints come together to accomplish shared objectives. In a corporate setting, this synergy stimulates creativity, builds resilience and fosters an inclusive culture.

On the other hand, when only anions, or only cations are put together, they experience strong electrostatic repulsion, resulting in division as opposed to the aforementioned unification. This phenomenon is a reminder that not all partnerships are advantageous. Like the repulsive forces between like charges, in some cases, like viewpoints might sometimes hinder progress. However, aligning objectives and creating an atmosphere where different points of view are

respected and allowed to coexist peacefully will make an organisation thrive.

Neutral particles, which possess no charge, provide a balanced perspective. They can act as mediators, facilitating interactions between positively and negatively charged entities. In a corporate context, neutral entities, such as mediators or facilitators, play a vital role in bridging divides and fostering cooperation. Their presence can reduce tensions and foster a harmonious atmosphere where diverse strengths are leveraged effectively.

Let's reflect on how this principle applies to the European Parliament today.

In the busy European Parliament, MEPs are like charged particles – when they work together, they create great policies! But when they do nothing but bicker, nothing gets done. That's where neutral mediators come in, helping everyone talk and cooperate. Remember, "Together we are stronger!" Let's join forces and create policies that everyone can get behind.



## Beatrice White

Senior Editor at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, we are still a long way from achieving gender parity in politics in Europe. This is the case at the European level, where President [von der Leyen struggled](#) to put together a balanced Commission, as much as at the national level, with [poor female representation](#) in many governments.

Addressing parity at the top goes far beyond appointing women to political leadership. It begins by encouraging their participation at all levels of public life – in "everyday" politics. This means ensuring enough women are in the room not just at the highest levels of power but at local council meetings, branch meetings of political parties and trade unions, gatherings of civil society associations, campaigning groups and local media, etc.

All citizens should have the right to make politics a part of their daily life, actively participating in shaping the society they live in. This participation is vital for a thriving democracy, which requires much more from citizens

than casting votes. But this participation is hugely time- and energy-consuming, and many women are already overstretched with work and family commitments.

This is why support and solidarity are essential and should not merely be symbolic. Establishing parity rules and actively encouraging women to put themselves forward are positive steps, but they need to be paired with material commitments. Organised networks and dedicated funds can help ensure caring responsibilities are not a barrier to women's participation – particularly for those on low incomes. Quantifying the cost of care on budget lines also helps to render it more visible and respected in a society which primarily values what it can put a number to.

Tackling the problem of "not enough women" for top jobs in Europe means nurturing and promoting women's political participation in their local communities. We need to start at the roots.



**Brooke Moore**  
Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I want to move past disbelief-fatigue, watching the daily setbacks against human rights. I don't particularly want to spend another Friday night explaining that the gender pay gap does in fact still exist or pointing out that "no known health side effects" is often a misnomer for insufficient research across demographics. I could spend my 300 words listing recent attacks on rights (I could, for example, mention the rollback of diversity initiatives and healthcare protections for transgender people in the US, or the rising rhetoric, policy initiatives and violence against LGBTQI+ individuals across Europe).

Instead, I will refer to poet and comedian ALOK's comedy special, "Biology!". The performance points out that hate and prejudice serve as distractions from confronting our own impermanence when it is precisely this shared experience that should unite us. Rest assured, this isn't my opening for a tangent on

mortality. However, I keep coming back to this point, not necessarily for its philosophy, but because it pulled me out of feeling deflated and reminded me that, alongside the deep anger and sadness that isn't going anywhere, there is still space for action rooted in connection and shared purpose.

We are living in a time when many face subjugation and fear. When fiscal policy somehow takes precedence over basic human rights, and human identities and freedoms are instrumentalised in politics. In 2025 we must go beyond speaking out to include sustained engagement and action. It must also be about resilience. Building community, strengthening connections and ensuring that those who stand together also support and uplift one another. Impermanence may be unsettling, but it also means nothing is fixed – neither progress, nor backlash, nor the way we choose to collectively respond.



**Chaka Welch**  
IT manager and anti-racism advocate

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A few weeks ago, Belgium finally announced its new government. At last.

We waited, as always – patient but not complacent – watching history repeat itself. Another record-breaking delay, another government that looks just like the ones before. A handful of women, nearly all from right-wing parties. Not one person of colour.

So much for progress.

As a woman of colour, a youth advocate, a mother, a European, a human, I pause. I reflect on what it means to belong in spaces that do not reflect us, on what it means to have a voice that seems soundless.

But are we really soundless? Or simply unheard when we stand alone?

History tells us no system is permanent. Power shifts. Ripples become waves.

I think of my grandmother, Dame Maizie Barker-Welch of Barbados. As president of the Inter-American Commission of Women (1990–1992), she fought for women's rights with an urgency the world could not ignore. She helped shape legislation against gender-based violence – not just for her time, but for generations to come. Thirty years later, in 2022, she was honoured for her legacy. The ripples of her work had not faded; they had strengthened.

Because *together* is not just standing side by side. It is carrying forward the battles of those before us, refusing to disappear.

And today, in Belgium – a country with the highest voting rate in Europe, a country with no excuse for political inertia – now is the time. To echo the voices of women before us, to rise with the voices alongside us, to demand space, to demand power.

Because we are not soundless. We are only ignored when we stand apart.



**Danielle Brady**

Senior Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I can't believe the world looks as it does. Growing up, I believed progress was inevitable – that gender equality could only improve. I never truly considered that progress wasn't guaranteed or that rights could be rolled back, especially the rights of women and marginalised groups.

Yet, despite a global context dominated by so-called 'strong men' and the rise of the radical right in Europe, I still see hope. This hope is informed by those around me who continue to believe in progress towards gender equality. However, hope alone is not enough – action is required. And that action must be more than just reactionary. To truly safeguard the progress we've made in areas like reproductive rights, we need to take a proactive and preventive approach. Combating misinformation and disinformation is critical to prevent the spread of false narratives.

Regressive movements are not exclusive to countries like the United States but are also unfolding within the EU. The current situation in France, Germany, Belgium

and the Netherlands is concerning, and I dread the implications of a further rise in far-right ideologies, particularly for gender equality. Without addressing the underlying issues that fuel the far right – and which, ironically, disproportionately affect women – such as the cost-of-living crisis, housing shortages and inadequate healthcare, this movement will continue to grow.

In 2025, I understand that progress is fragile but also that collective action – when thoughtful and forward-thinking – can be a powerful force for change. This requires not only political will but also the engagement of citizens across the EU to advocate for policies that promote equality and justice. The EU must remain a champion of gender equality, reinforcing policies that protect reproductive rights, combat gender-based violence, and close the gender pay gap.

In 2025, our strength lies not just in reacting to challenges, but in actively shaping the future before it's dictated to us.



**Elizabeth Kuiper**

Associate Director and Head of the Social Europe and Well-being Programme at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025 I firmly believe that we need to address the polarisation damaging our societies, democracies and personal relationships. Many of the elections that took place in 2024 - globally as well as within the EU - have seen incumbent leaders replaced by radical right figures as well as mainstream parties shifting to more radical positions. Their agenda seems to be defined by the word 'anti': anti-democracy, anti-rule of law, anti-gender policies – I could go on for much longer.

What all these politicians and parties have in common is how they divide our societies and democracies. They do not bring people together around a common project for society but drive divisions. This in turn leads to an alienated populace that refuses to accept the 'other', blaming minority groups for problems like migration or the hollowing out of public services.

Polarisation of the public sphere is nothing new, but social media and disinformation aggravates the issue.

The use of algorithms and personalised information leads people to a selective view of the world - and often an oversimplification - of reality.

Weakened social cohesion and the use of social media platforms drive people to take sides rather than trying to understand others. Politically, when citizens believe that they are left behind - or even betrayed - by political elites, they become more susceptible to populist narratives.

There is no quick fix for this. Striving for more homogeneous societies is certainly not the answer. Adjusting our democracies to the digital age and restoring a sense of agency in a world of constant social change is a starting point. Under the right conditions, diversity makes society stronger. Inclusion and meaningful contact between groups and people enriches our societies and personal relationships.

In 2025, we better realise that together, we are powerful.



**Emma Woodford**

Chief Operating Officer at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I ally myself and commit to being a stronger one. At each point of the compass, we see communities and nature being undermined by ideologies that seek to divide and harm. To the east, Israel and now, Trump, are intent on committing genocide against the Palestinian people.

Beyond that, tensions around Taiwan, Korea and sea disputes between China and its neighbours continue. To the north, a battle looms for Arctic resources and geographical advantage made accessible by climate change. Throughout the southern hemisphere in countries where the global majority live, millions are at risk of dying of HIV/AIDS, denied opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty and protecting globally important biodiversity due to the freeze on USAID.

The Trump administration appears to want a more capitalist, transactional approach to foreign aid, reminiscent of the colonial era more than the progressive

gains of decolonisation. In the US, cuts in USAID have already harmed farmers dependent on their government to buy their grain for aid programmes. In addition to new legislation to curb the rights of anyone who does not identify as male or female, we are witnessing American companies eliminating initiatives designed to encourage and protect diversity and equality as they genuflect to the new US Presidential administration.

In Europe, the repression of civil society in states like Hungary is starting to encroach on EU policymaking. Islamophobic, antisemitic and misogynistic attitudes and policies are gaining ground as the influence of far-right parties gathers pace.

In the face of such division, allyship as a means of partnering with those despised by toxic politicians and billionaires is one of the best ways we can resist in order to protect equality, the natural world as a part of ourselves and communities under threat.



**Fabian Zuleeg**

Chief Executive and Chief Economist at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, we are facing a global collective challenge that threatens achievements in equality and diversity as a central tenet of our liberal democracies. With Donald Trump as US President, misogyny and a disregard for women's rights are accompanied by a general deterioration in political culture and language. The latter has become increasingly vicious in seeking to diminish opponents. The vitriol is particularly aimed at women and/or minorities, and migrants are targeted especially.

Of course, this is not only the case in the US. In many minds, the perceived inferiority of women, or any 'others', is deeply ingrained, often embedded in legislation. But the change in the US matters, given its power and status as leading proponent of the West. It changes the direction of travel and legitimises a view of the world where

everything can be said and eventually done. It will act as a signal for many others who seek to change direction in their country or reinforce such trends.

This will come as a shock to many in the younger generations in liberal democracies, who take many of the hard-won achievements of the last decades for granted. They are often unable to imagine a world which is less tolerant and fair, but more confrontational and polarised and where discrimination is implicitly or explicitly enshrined in the political system. They will have to realise that they have to fight for these achievements against determined opponents, in the confrontational world of today's politics. That is not fair on them but if we who share these values stand together with the younger generations and they get involved we can hope to continue moving in the right direction.





## Georgia Mourad Brooks

Founder & CEO The Nine, Senior Advisor at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I do not believe that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is dead. At worst, it's on life support. It can be revived once everyone appreciates how it not only makes society fairer but also stronger. DEI helps to break down systemic barriers, allows us to better understand one another, and promotes fair and constructive behaviours.

The EU is a global leader in DEI, championing laws and policies that promote equal pay, parental leave, and representation of women at board level. Nonetheless, challenges persist; from debates on the definition of rape to the gender pay gap, and worsening underrepresentation of women in politics and leadership.

At a micro level, addressing these issues requires a common challenge to discrimination and the promotion of equity. If both men and women benefit from a fairer, just, and accessible society, it is only logical that both need to collaborate and share responsibility to make it happen.

While women have historically faced disproportionate violence and discrimination, men also suffer from rigid

gender stereotypes and toxic messaging that negatively impact their opportunities and well-being.

DEI initiatives are the bridge between the theoretical/aspirational and lived experiences: Diversity brings together different perspectives, experiences, and ideas, leading to greater creativity and problem-solving. Equity ensures that opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of gender, race, ability or socio-economic background. Inclusion fosters a sense of belonging, ensuring that all feel valued and heard.

In the workplace, DEI initiatives ensure that hiring, promotions, and leadership roles are based on merit rather than gender bias. In politics, fair representation is essential for effective governance, while policies that ensure equal opportunities for both genders create stronger democracies.

At a time when even our democracies are under threat, what could be a more powerful statement than reconfirming DEI as a tool for strength and opportunity?



## Giulia Torchio

Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, more than ever, the personal is political. Illiberal winds of change have brought back beliefs and understandings of gender roles that should have become history. Economic, social and reproductive rights achieved through decades of struggles are being set back as the public discourse grows poisoned with hatred and ignorance. In this scenario, it is not uncommon to feel overwhelmed with fear and despair.

We should not succumb to these feelings, however. Instead, we should remember that rebellion and solidarity remain powerful antidotes for hatred and oppression. Two of Simone de Beauvoir's reflections can help us navigate these difficult times:

*"Change your life today. Don't gamble on the future, act now, without delay."* – After the Second Sex, 1984

The present is our moment to build a different future. We all can play a relevant role in the pursuit of important

freedoms. Inertia today only empowers those who will benefit from oppression tomorrow. Therefore, we should all dare to be more rebellious in the face of injustices. Though the magnitude of the task may seem daunting, rebellion can also be found in small, daily acts of defiance.

*"One's life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation, compassion."* – The Coming of Age, 1970

Our existence is not only intrinsically political, but also strongly defined by social relationships. It is through our being-with-others that we realise our potential and discover who we are and who we want to be. It follows that the pursuit for freedom cannot be an individual quest but must be a political project based on solidarity. Concretely, this places the focus of the struggle for freedom on the well-being of the community over individuals and reminds us that we are not alone in the fight against injustices.





## Guido Broekhoven

Head of Policy Research and Development at WWF International

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In 2025, the world of nature conservation looks very different from when it started many decades ago. Nature conservation has traditionally been dominated by men. This has certainly been true for the [Worldwide Fund for Nature](#) (or WWF), the organisation I work for.

Established in 1961 by European and American men to protect wildlife and establish protected areas, WWF has steadily grown into one of the world's largest nature conservation NGOs – present in over 40 countries. It implements a diverse set of conservation programmes ranging from food systems transformation and financial systems reform to protected area management. With the expansion of its programmes and funding base, staff numbers have steadily increased as well. WWF now employs more than 9000 people around the world. And while it has taken a long time for the gender balance to 'catch up', over the years the organisation has made significant progress: 52.6% of all staff globally and

53.2% of top management identify as women (2024 figures). In 2023, the first female director general of WWF International was appointed, symbolising (and spurring on!) that shift.

But we're not there yet. There are significant differences in gender balance between offices, with over 70% of female staff members in some but large male majorities in others, and far more male members of the national boards. And I am 'only' talking about gender balance; in many other ways, WWF is certainly not as diverse as society at large.

While several other international conservation NGOs are going through similar changes; not all have yet caught up. However, it is very encouraging to see that in some organisations a quiet revolution is taking place, because only through an inclusive approach can we deal with the conservation challenges the world is facing today.



## Iana Maisuradze

Junior Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, the accumulated consequences of long-time challenges are facing us. Our everyday political life has become a [hyper-competitive and hyper-transactional geopolitics](#), a symptom of which we see in significant [budget cuts](#) to policies of gender equality, diversity, equity and inclusion.

With the rise of hybrid warfare, [gender disinformation is causing security threats](#), as authoritarian regimes threaten women's role in public life. Democratic societies can only thrive when there is meaningful engagement of all genders in leadership and decision-making.

With the rise of such challenges, the EU should further promote gender-responsible foreign policy. The UN Women Peace and Security agenda should be further mainstreamed in every aspect of the EU's daily life. The EU should advance gender equality and promote feminist-inspired foreign policy. What is more, no girl or woman should be left behind and held back

from stepping up, raising their voice and feeling the power they possess. Their self-confidence, emotional intelligence and thought leadership should be heard at all stages of national, EU and multilateral fora.

I ask myself, what can I do to help women succeed. Empowering one girl, one student, one woman, one mother, and one grandmother at a time is the answer. I would like to tell that singular person that "you are enough", "you can achieve what you aim for" and "you are not overconfident if you ask for what you deserve." Empowering our communities is where the real impact can be seen manifested.

In 2025, I will continue to bring the Women Peace and Security agenda to the forefront of my work, centring it in all I do, including in transatlantic security and defence dimension and NATO-EU relations. In 2025, the cry of young Georgian girls for a Euro-Atlantic future of Georgia will be heard in policy dialogues, analysis and projects.



### **Irune Aguirrezabal Quijera**

Director of Human Rights, Democracy, Gender Equality  
at Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI)

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In 2025, we look back at the 1995 Beijing International Women's Conference. We certainly must celebrate what an extraordinary achievement it was. By all accounts, it was a turning point for humankind. Women's rights were finally human rights. Concepts, beliefs, institutions, laws, women's access to opportunities, resources, to education, normalised today, were introduced following that momentum. It brought significant advancements for the rights of girls and women and gender equality worldwide.

UN Women was one of those institutions which I joined in 2013. As Senior Policy Advisor in Latin America and the Caribbean, I had the opportunity to support the process to advance gender democracy. Women's political representation was the main drive for change. I was impressed by the inexhaustible strength of the women's movement behind every tiny step of the journey.

The 30th anniversary of Beijing should guide us in a renewed determination to end the patriarchal ideological thinking characterised by the masculinised

domination of female bodies and political power. Still today, everywhere you look, gender gaps remind us that transformative feminist change has just begun.

Meanwhile, resistance and obstacles are growing due to the tensions derived from a socio-cultural struggle waged between competing ideologies. While feminist thought has today achieved cultural hegemony in society, two extreme ideologies have evolved in parallel and in virulent competition with each other: the anti-gender and ultra-conservative movement and the gender identity ideology. As a result of that tension, financial and technological extremist neoliberalism has sought a unique opportunity to defend its only interest: to reduce the significance of the State and its redistributive capacities through public policies. This is happening right when the cultural battle in favour of co-responsibility had been won – a huge step forward. There is no coincidence. Let's not give up.



### **Jibecke Joensson**

Head of EU Affairs and the Brussels Office of CMI  
– Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation

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In 2025, we need to recalibrate the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, shifting focus from women's participation to women's agency.

The WPS agenda was a game changer for ensuring women's inclusion in peace and security. UN Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security provides a central lever for women to call for action and accountability. Including women has become a matter of legitimacy, and we have terms like *manel* to shame those who organise discussions without women. The resolution has also enhanced collaboration between fields and actors in peace and security.

However, implementation has been lagging, and unfortunately, things have taken a turn for the worse. Conceptually, the WPS agenda is often seen as a separate track rather than an essential tool for advancing peace and security. Structurally, visible advances in gender parity (albeit far from perfect still) have had limited impact on reshaping political processes and power

structures, and on reversing entrenched patterns of violence and oppressive ruling systems. And financially, the WPS agenda remains severely under-resourced.

We need an approach based on women's agency. We need to work with women political actors, leaders, peacebuilders and mediators to enhance their roles in dialogues, negotiations and conflict prevention. While efforts have to be context-specific, the three following areas carry great potential for enhanced impact. First, where women are politically marginalised, fostering broader coalitions of women can be key to increasing their collective power. Second, preparing or linking women to peace processes through coordination across tracks, or raising awareness and fostering recognition for traditional engagement channels, can be essential for enhancing women's influence. Third, instead of traditional capacity-building, it is more impactful to connect women leaders with peace actors, supporting and facilitating peer learning and ensuring the safety and protection of women.



**Joanna Maycock**  
European Women's Rights Campaigner

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In 2025, a movement swept across Europe, ignited by women who embodied the power of feminist leadership. They reimagined what it means to lead – centring care, radical inclusion and a bold vision for a world where everyone can thrive on a healthy planet. This movement was built on decades of tireless progress in securing rights for women from all walks of life – victories in legal protections against violence, reproductive rights, pay equality and accessible childcare. However, by 2025, those hard-won gains were under threat. Radical nationalism and authoritarianism were on the rise throughout the world, creating a backlash against women, LGBTQI+ communities and minorities, while undermining public services and environmental protections.

Instead of retreating, women across the continent rose with unprecedented courage. What started as a defensive response evolved into a vibrant, hopeful movement. Women politicians, activists, artists, musicians and community leaders joined forces with allies from all backgrounds. This movement wasn't just about defending the past but about dismantling entrenched systems of oppression – whether rooted in

environmental destruction, economic injustice, or social inequality. Together, they created a transformational, joyful feminist vision for Europe – one that placed care for people and the planet at its heart.

By 2035, Europe had been reshaped. Feminist leadership proved that by centring care, embracing anti-racism and ensuring inclusion for all, societies could be built where everyone thrives. The legacy of 2025 became a testament to the power of women-led, intersectional and intergenerational movements, fuelled by the unwavering support and solidarity of allies.

Women and their allies mobilised vast financial, creative and social resources to fuel feminist movements, investing in progressive media, amplifying feminist voices and challenging misinformation. A new generation rejected divisive narratives and embraced new platforms that celebrated dialogue, empathy and collective action. Looking back from 2035, we recognise 2025 as the moment feminist leadership began to shatter traditional hierarchies, championing power with others rather than over others.



**Juliet Lawal**  
Civil Society Relations Manager at the OECD  
Directorate for Communications

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In 2025, I stand at the intersection of race, gender and leadership, continuing to champion the visibility and empowerment of women from all backgrounds. As a Black woman of Nigerian descent, raised in London and now a mum of three young boys living in Paris, my journey has been shaped by resilience, advocacy and a commitment to justice and inclusion.

Throughout my career, I have navigated spaces where I was often the only one who looked like me. From my early roles in the private sector to my senior roles at the OECD, I have learned that bringing my authentic self to the table is a superpower. I remind myself and the women I sponsor and mentor, of the Marianne Williamson poem – women playing small does not serve the world; when we allow ourselves to shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same.

The fight for gender equity is not one-dimensional. Women do not experience barriers in the same way. That is why intersectionality must be at the heart of our advocacy. I continue to push for structural reforms that embed race and gender equity into workplace policies, ensuring that diversity is not just an aspiration but a lived reality, if not for me, for the future girls and ladies that will come after me.

Awareness precedes choice, and choice precedes change. True progress happens when leadership moves from indifference to allyship, from silence to advocacy. Together, women are powerful – not just in our individual achievements but in the collective force we create when we lift each other up. By amplifying every woman's voice, across all intersections, we are shaping a future that is more just, equitable and inclusive for generations to come. We are stronger together!





### Katy Gil

Executive Director of the ASOCIACION DE MUJERES AFRODESCENDIENTE (AMA)

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In 2025, I rise with the dawn, A vision ignites, a new path is drawn. With sisters beside me, strong and true, Together, we are powerful – we break through.

From whispers and dreams once left unheard, we lift our voices, shaping the world. Hand in hand, we build and fight, Turning darkness into light.

With deep roots and sacred ties, we stand unwavering, reaching the skies. No fear nor doubt will silence our song. Together, we have been powerful all along.

Through action, passion, and endless strides, we forge a future where hope resides. Workshops, meetings, hands intertwined, A revolution of heart and mind.

In 2025, we stand and declare, that change is here, beyond compare. Together, we shine, a beacon bright, changing the world with voice and light.



### Kel Nkondock

Communications and Events Manager at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, it feels as though we've taken a massive step backward in the fight for gender equality. Human rights that once seemed secure are now under threat, particularly in the US where [Diversity, Equality and Inclusion \(DEI\) programmes](#) are being rolled back, funding for [medical research](#) is being slashed, and basic [reproductive](#) and [migrant](#) rights are being eroded.

In 2024, the rise of far-right parties on this side of the Atlantic – emboldened by the prospect of a Trump 2.0 administration – reminded us that no society is immune to their threats. Assuming that attacks on rights won't affect us simply because they don't directly impact us is not just short-sighted, it is dangerously naive.

In 2020, The European Commission presented its [Gender equality strategy](#) aiming to make real progress towards a Europe where “everyone has equal opportunities to thrive” by 2025. This strategy combined gender mainstreaming with targeted actions, emphasising [intersectionality](#) as a core principle. Recognising that gender-based discrimination intersects

with other forms of oppression was a significant step for the EU, but as writer and educator [Amuna Wagner](#) explains, analysing oppression solely through the lens of identity is insufficient to grasp its full complexity.

In 2010, philosopher María Lugones popularised the term Decolonial Feminism, arguing that colonialism imposed a western-centric, hierarchical gender system that continues to shape oppression today. A truly transformative gender equality agenda in the EU must acknowledge the cultural, geopolitical and historical context that shapes women's diverse realities.

In 1985, Margaret Atwood wrote “Nothing changes instantly: in a gradually heating bathtub you'd be boiled to death before you knew it”. Safeguarding our own rights begins by standing up for those most at risk. Understanding coloniality deepens our commitment to solidarity and collective action – both of which must be at the heart of the next gender equality strategy if Europe truly wants to create a society where everyone has equal opportunities to thrive.



**Laura Sullivan**

Facilitator, moderator and activist for a more just Europe

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In 2025, I dream of a Europe that stops and breathes and dreams. Recent years have brought with them the usual acceleration of global crises. But this is now coupled with an intense form of inescapable daily doomsday headlines that have brought us to a state of collective bleakness where imagination is scarce and worst case scenarios are inevitable.

Nobody is saying that everything is awesome. But while urgency and realism are useful, they can become a problem when consumed in pure form, without a dose of the (active) hope in the dark prescribed by feminists Rebecca Solnit and Joanna Macy. That hope is out there in the form of countless actions by people all across this continent to create alternatives to the mainstream, whether that be pesticide-free villages, affordable sustainable housing or cities that welcome migrants.

Philosopher Bayo Akomolafe says that “when everything feels urgent, we must slow down”. We would do well to listen to him. Reactive panic is both non-strategic and bad for the health. So too is sticking to single issues and quick wins that we aren’t winning anymore.

2025 could mark a new start that reflects on the past and dreams of a future that starts with peace. It could be the year we wake up to the changes needed to the man-made systems that do not serve humanity or the planet. The good news is that man-made systems can be unmade and remade, starting with an analysis of power. I dream of leaders who are aware that they cannot be around forever and see part of their job as boosting future leaders now. Leaders who know you need to both dream and plan, ideally with at least seven generations ahead in mind. Those generations still have a chance of a decent future, especially if we start dreaming of their present and work our way back from there.

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**Liza Saris**

Project Manager at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I want women to have the full support of their colleagues, organisations, and communities to lead the fight against the rising tide of illiberalism. This is not a symbolic gesture of diversity and inclusion - it is a strategic necessity. Women, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds, have lived experience of resisting oppression, navigating political adversity, and building coalitions. Their leadership is not just valuable, it is essential.

Institutions and organisations where decision-making is dominated by those who have never faced personal discrimination, lack the urgency, insight, and resilience required to counter illiberal threats. At this very moment, the stakes are high, the consequences severe, and neutrality is not an option. But for many women and racialised people, such neutrality is a privilege they never had. Our bodies, rights, dreams, and choices have always been political. This is why these groups must be supported to lead in envisioning democratic alternatives. To win, we must listen to and learn from those who have lived under, endured, and fought against illiberalism.

Women’s movements and civil society organisations have long demonstrated how to transcend political divides, forge alliances, and mobilise communities around shared values. The Polish Women’s Strike movement, for example, has shown how women can be at the forefront of mass resistance against governmental overreach.

Supporting women in leadership strengthens our collective defence of democratic values. But we must recognise the cost of this fight. The toll of enduring hate online and offline, of performing under constant pressure, and having the personal become political, can be heavy. Many women disengage from the public debate to protect themselves. We must take proactive steps to protect those who speak out. We need to listen to their needs and stand with them. In 2025, I want female leaders to not stand alone but to be valued and supported.



## Madda Magbity

Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, we stand at a pivotal moment in the journey towards gender equality. While progress is undeniable, challenges persist. Together, we form a powerful force for change.

The [World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report](#) shows that 68.5% of the global gender gap has been closed. In real terms, this means millions of women gaining access to education, economic opportunities, and leadership roles. The resulting increase in workforce participation has added an estimated \$7 trillion to global GDP, underscoring the transformative potential of gender equity.

Yet, disparities remain. Women earn approximately 80% of what men earn and hold only 32% of senior leadership roles globally. At CEO-level, representation drops to just 6.2% in [S&P 500 companies](#). Debates about a recent [Directive to address gender-based violence](#) further emphasize the urgency of these issues.

Global initiatives like the [World Bank Group's Gender Strategy 2024-2030](#), aim to close gender gaps in earnings, boost access to technology, and support women-led businesses. The European Commission's 2024-2029 mandate is taking crucial steps to advance gender equality, with commitments such as the [Pay Transparency Directive](#), and the Directive on Gender Balance on Corporate Boards. These align with the objectives of the [Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#).

We would be wise to heed [Malala Yousafzai's](#) reminder that "you're not alone, that you are standing with millions of your sisters around the world, is vital." In solidarity, we can address persistent challenges, including [the projection that over 388 million women and girls will live in extreme poverty by 2030](#).

On this [International Women's Day](#), let us applaud our achievements and renew our commitment to the work ahead. When women rise, societies thrive. Our voices and unity are catalysts for lasting change. Together, we are powerful.



## Méabh McMahon

TV reporter and host

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It is 2025, and finally the face of the EU is female. Regardless of their politics, Ursula von der Leyen, Roberta Metsola and Kaja Kallas are indefatigable women with a pep in their step. They can show up in Strasbourg one minute and in the Middle East the next. No long lavish lunches or boozy nights of networking - these women are workaholics and should be an inspiration to all.

Yet, they are not. As women, they are constantly judged. Often it is other women who judge them. From their hair to their outfit, women are deft critics of other women, as of ourselves. Why are we obsessed with bringing ourselves and other women down?

To survive and try to thrive in this man's world, where more and more bullies call the shots, women need to support women. While rich men in power operate like toddlers - women bring empathy and know-how to politics and the public sphere. We are smart, articulate

and fabulous. We have so much to say and need to take up more space.

How about we stop judging ourselves and each other and start saying yes. Yes, we deserve that pay raise and need to demand it. Yes, we are the right experts to speak on that panel and appear on live TV.

I still struggle to convince women to appear as on-air experts. We feel too chubby, too thin, unprepared or inadequate. No - we are accomplished and passionate and that will shine through.

When sharing my thoughts with some fellow female reporters in the newsroom, my Swedish colleague Laura Ingemarsson hit the nail on the head. "We all have a patriarchal brain worm in our heads that is impossible to get rid of, and that is why male voices are heard higher, not just by men, but also by other women", she quipped.





**Nina Brukljan**  
Adviser, European Parliament

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In 2025, as I look back over the past year, I feel a sense of dissonance.

On the one hand, I am filled with pride and hope as more women take on leadership roles and shatter glass ceilings. Their growing visibility and efforts to challenge the status quo are inspiring.

On the other hand, I'm troubled by the setbacks and pushbacks we are facing. The erosion of reproductive rights, the alarming rise of gender-based violence, including in my home country of Montenegro, and the increasing normalisation of misogyny and sexism all feel like a punch to the gut.

As I look at the incredible women around me, I'm struck by how many are still fighting for basic fairness. They're juggling the demands of a career with the responsibilities of caring for children, often while supporting elderly parents. The low levels of paid parental leave offered in

some European countries reinforces traditional gender roles, leaving to women to shoulder major parts of household responsibilities.

I do not want to forget that I am living and working in the privileged European West, while the gender equality is a global struggle. In many parts of the world, women's voices are silenced, marginalised or even brutally suppressed. I see women of colour, indigenous women, and LGBTQ+ women facing challenges and barriers that are often overlooked or ignored.

Our fight for equality is not just about individual rights, but about collective emancipation. It's about recognizing that women's empowerment is not just a moral imperative, but a necessary condition for a more just and equitable society. As we celebrate the achievements of women past and present, we must work towards a world where every woman can thrive, without apology, without exception, and without fear.



**Roberta Metsola**  
President of the European Parliament

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In 2025, we will strive to provide women and girls across Europe with the tools they need to achieve even greater success. Across business, politics, science and arts, women are already flourishing and inspiring others. When women rise, many more rise thanks to them. And empowering women means powering Europe's economy too: the gender employment gap costs our economy €370 billion a year, while advances in gender equality could boost EU GDP per capita by between 6 and 9% by 2050.

We must therefore continue to chip away at the glass ceiling and tear down barriers that still stand in the way. The European Parliament is answering the call. Our work on the Women on Boards and Pay Transparency Directives opens doors to management positions and narrows the gender pay gap. We are integrating gender equality into all our policies and laws. Parity is becoming central to everything we do. The Parliament is committed to helping all women, regardless of their background, to receive the education, training and job opportunities they need so that every single one can truly prosper.

The European Parliament will always support extraordinary women. We warmly received Yulia Navalnaya, Alexei Navalny's widow, and exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, courageous women who fought and still fight for freedom and democracy. The Parliament awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Jina Mahsa Amini and the Woman, Life, Freedom movement in Iran, in 2023. It was a tribute to all the brave and defiant women, men and young people over there who continue to fight for their rights and for change despite increasing pressure. I also recently had the honour of meeting the incredible Reem Al Hajajra in Ramallah. The organisation she founded, "Women of the Sun", provides vital aid to women harmed by conflict and collaborates with like-minded Israeli groups.

The courage and vision of these women should inspire us to pursue the struggle for women's rights relentlessly, so that International Women's Day will no longer be necessary, as true gender equality will be a reality for mothers, sisters and daughters everywhere. Let us continue to work together to make this dream come true.



### Samia Mármol Conejo

Lawyer, mediator and specialist in gender, violence and human rights

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*“We are like páramo grass: you pull it out, and it grows back. And with páramo grass, we shall sow the world.”*  
– Dolores Cacuango

In 2025, the participation of Indigenous women in social, political, and community spaces remains limited. Ecuador has been home to great women who made historical change. One such figure is Dolores Cacuango, an indigenous leader and pioneer in the fight for the rights of Indigenous peoples. She was committed to bilingual education, through the establishment of schools teaching in both Kichwa and Spanish, because this right was denied for them. Her voice changed the lives of many generations.

Historically, indigenous women have played a crucial role in community organisation and the defence of rights. However, their participation in decision-making spaces continues to face multiple obstacles. Nevertheless, the Constitution and the Code of Democracy have promoted gender parity in Ecuador, leading to an increase in female

representation in elected positions. In the 2023 elections, there were 7.14% indigenous women candidates compared to 84.04% non-indigenous women candidates. And, for the first time in history, an indigenous woman became the mayor of her province. In 2025, two indigenous women, among 17 candidates, ran for the vice-presidency of Ecuador.

To strengthen the participation of indigenous women, it is crucial to implement concrete actions: ensure parity in political, social and community spaces, promote training and empowerment processes for effective participation, and eradicate the gender-based political violence that many face.

On International Women’s Day, it is essential to recognise the struggle of every Indigenous woman who has paved the way for future generations and demand conditions that ensure their full participation in decision-making, to build freer, fairer and more inclusive societies.

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### Thanos Dellatolas

Research Assistant at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I will use my power to support the formation of a new social contract – one that originates from the collective will of society rather than exclusively from traditional governance structures. In an era when the status quo struggles to respond to multifaceted challenges – from the democratic deficit, corruption, and growing inequalities to geopolitical challenges and planetary threats – it is imperative to reexamine the manner in which decisions are made and policies are produced.

Scientific insights must be reintegrated as a tool to underpin public dialogue, ensuring that such discourse remains political and not merely technical. Public dialogue should no longer be confined to narrow, specialised frameworks but must open space for a pluralistic and multidimensional exchange of ideas that reflects the reality of civil society. The strength of our political strategy as a Union against adversaries, competitors and ostensible enemies, both internally and externally, requires going beyond intellectual elitism and towards an open and honest discussion with the broader public. We are indebted to our future; consequently, we must

create an environment that empowers and distributes responsibility to the average person, whether by curbing the asymmetrical flow of information or by accepting the risks inherent in the pursuit of democracy and freedom.

The transformation of the decision-making process requires engagement from citizens so that political choices accurately reflect the needs and priorities of society amid evolving crises. The new social contract, as a profound collective readjustment of our shared pan-European spirit, constitutes an imperative for preserving democratic values and European political unity – a mandate that politics must heed without delay.

We must develop the legacy of the French Revolution and the social contract as articulated by Rousseau and Locke. In doing so, we honour the longstanding pursuit of equality and justice, reaffirming that democracy rests on mutual support, open dialogue and cross-cutting alliances that complement our traditions. We must awaken the Union’s survival instincts.



**Tyana Barry**  
Media officer at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, I want the collective to stride forward in support of women and minorities across the globe.

Crackdowns on gender and minority rights have never been so alarming. They expose how quickly our rights can be rolled back. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) frameworks have been shut down across the United States and beyond days after President Trump took office. This threatens to undo decades of progress made to integrate marginalised communities who do not have equal opportunities in the workforce. As of 2024, no country has achieved [gender equality](#). Sexual and reproductive health is at risk across the globe. Women and girls are disproportionality at risk in conflicts, climate and economic crises.

In times where being hopeful seems like a lost cause, pushing past the limitations is where we succeed. There's hope: [France](#) was the first country to enshrine the right to abortion in its constitution. This has the potential for

a domino effect. There are currently [112 countries](#) who participate in the National Action Plans on women, peace and security which facilitate participation in post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding – in 2010, this number was just 19. Only 12 countries held legal sanctions against domestic violence in 1995. As of 2025, [193 countries](#) have developed 1,583 legislative measures with 354 of these directly targeting domestic violence. Mexico and Namibia recently elected their [first female presidents](#). Child marriage has finally been banned in [Sierra Leone](#) and [Colombia](#). Much is left to do; this is just the beginning.

The backlash against DEI and the increasing erosion of our rights show that we can never give up the fight. We must progress on delivering access of services for girls, women and minorities – recent events across the globe have exposed this much.

Time's up and we are way past our wake-up call. Lasting change for all is of the essence.



**Wael Maâninou**  
Audiovisual officer at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, in Morocco, the challenges to women's participation in the workforce are deeply intertwined with broader socio-economic issues. According to recent statistics from the Haut-Commissariat au Plan, only 19% of women were active in the labour market in 2023, compared to 69% of men. This stark disparity reflects not only entrenched gender inequalities but also significant economic and educational challenges. In urban areas, women account for just 32% of the salaried workforce among the 18–60 age group.

Many families depend on a single income, often forcing minors from disadvantaged backgrounds to leave school for work, further perpetuating low educational attainment – with only around 20% of the workforce holding a higher education degree.

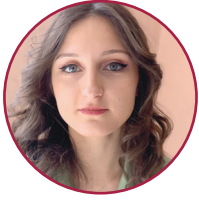
While Morocco has recently taken new steps toward reform, such as updating the 2004 Moudawana (Family Code) to better protect women's rights, progress remains slow. These reforms signal a commitment to greater

gender equality; however, they must be viewed through the lens of Morocco's cultural and social context. A purely Western vision of equality risks overlooking on-the-ground realities. In Morocco, poverty and patriarchal mindsets are an intangible psychological burden not just for women but also for men. This situation is compounded by the reliance on extended family networks as a de facto social security system, filling the gaps left by a limited welfare state.

In Morocco, the challenge is not simply to achieve gender equality in the Western sense but about ensuring basic economic security. Addressing these issues requires nuanced, culturally sensitive approaches that acknowledge the realities of a society where more than half of the population has a low level of education.

This understanding of Morocco's challenges is essential for shaping policies that address poverty and educational disparities, in order to achieve progress for women's rights and overall social development.





## **Xheimina Dervishi**

Junior Policy Analyst at the European Policy Centre

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In 2025, women hold half of all leadership positions and enjoy equal pay and the same career opportunities as men in all sectors. Gender discrimination is no longer a reality, while sexual and reproductive rights are universally protected and respected and gender-based violence has been eradicated.

Unfortunately, this is not the 2025 we can look forward to. Rather it's an ideal, sought for but never realised by feminist activists and women's rights pioneers. It's a world where equality is no longer a struggle, but a reality. Although progress has been made towards such an ideal, recent years have highlighted the necessity of reaffirming even the most fundamental principles of equality or risk backsliding.

An alarming sign of regression can be seen in the growing trend on social media of female influencers embracing a traditional conception of the housewife. They showcase their involvement in child-rearing and household duties, often stressing how women

naturally belong in the kitchen. This reaffirms outdated gender divides, where women are confined to roles of dependence rather than equality. It reinforces the idea that these roles are inherent or natural. While female influencers uphold an idealised traditional world, their male counterparts actively champion these beliefs through debates across multiple channels, using overt white supremacist rhetoric to engage young audiences. In an increasingly conservative Europe, the rights of women and minorities seem more fragile than ever, threatened by regressive policies. But history teaches us that collective resistance is our greatest strength.

In 2025 the freedom to determine our own lives is not negotiable anymore. In 2025, we want to feel safe in our homes, workplaces, streets, bodies and choices. Together, we can build a future where safety is not a privilege but a guaranteed right for all. A future where no social progress is taken for granted, and where the voices of those fighting for equality cannot be silenced.



**Corina Stratulat**  
PhD, Associate Director and  
Head of European Politics  
and Institutions Programme  
at the European Policy Centre



**Attila Kovács**  
PhD, CEO & Founder, Eulytix

Female representation in the European Parliament (EP) – the only directly elected EU institution – has steadily [increased](#) over the years, from 16% at the first EP elections in 1979 to 39% at the latest 2024 vote. Today, there are 277 women MEPs compared to 441 men MEPs. While the difference suggests that there is still work to be done for gender equality to become a reality in the European assembly, female representatives in the EP punch above their weight in their everyday performance in the Parliament.

Using data from [Eulytix](#), Graphs 1 and 2 below illustrate that women MEPs have a higher number of per capita amendments tabled individually or through co-sponsorship compared to all other members, including men.

Moreover, Eulytix data suggest that women MEPs have a higher number of speeches per capita than men MEPs. (see Graph 3).

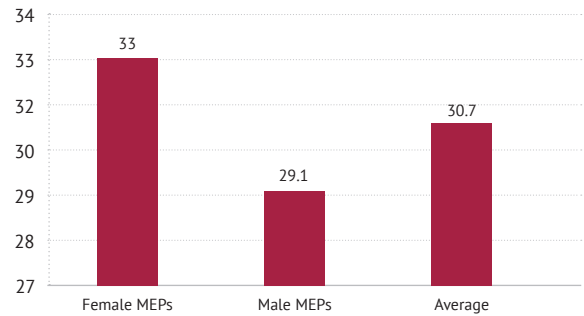
When looking at the legislative activity of women MEPs across party groups in Graph 4, Eulytix data show that female representatives in mainstream, pro-European parties are more diligent overall, outperforming their counterparts in the radical and/or Eurosceptic groups.

Finally, data compiled by Eulytix regarding the allocation of positions in the different EP bodies by gender reveal a mixed picture (see Graph 5) in that the share of female MEPs is balanced in the Conference of Presidents and as Committee chairs and Questors. However, women are overrepresented in the Bureau and underrepresented as Delegation chairs. Filtering by party exposes that far-right female MEPs are less likely to hold key positions, which could indicate that the *cordon sanitaire* holds, at least when it comes to the distribution of jobs.

Overall, these findings imply that European, democratic voices and values are well represented in the European Parliament by very engaged and industrious women MEPs. Their hard work brings compelling evidence that women can make an impact in a still largely male-dominated environment. The achievements of current female MEPs should inspire women to dare more and join the fight for gender equality and a democratic future by entering politics.

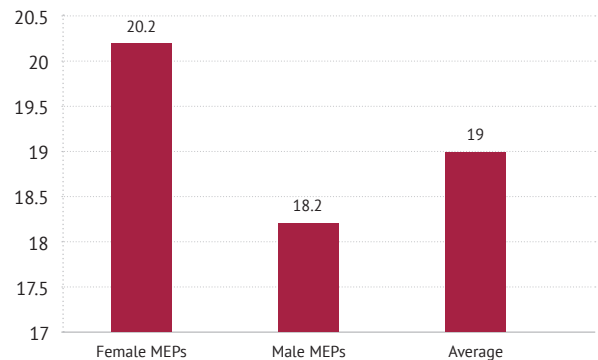
Graph 1

PER CAPITA NUMBER OF LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS BY GENDER



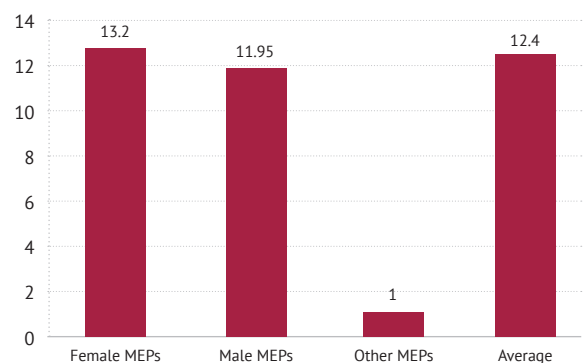
Graph 2

PER CAPITA NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS BY GENDER



Graph 3

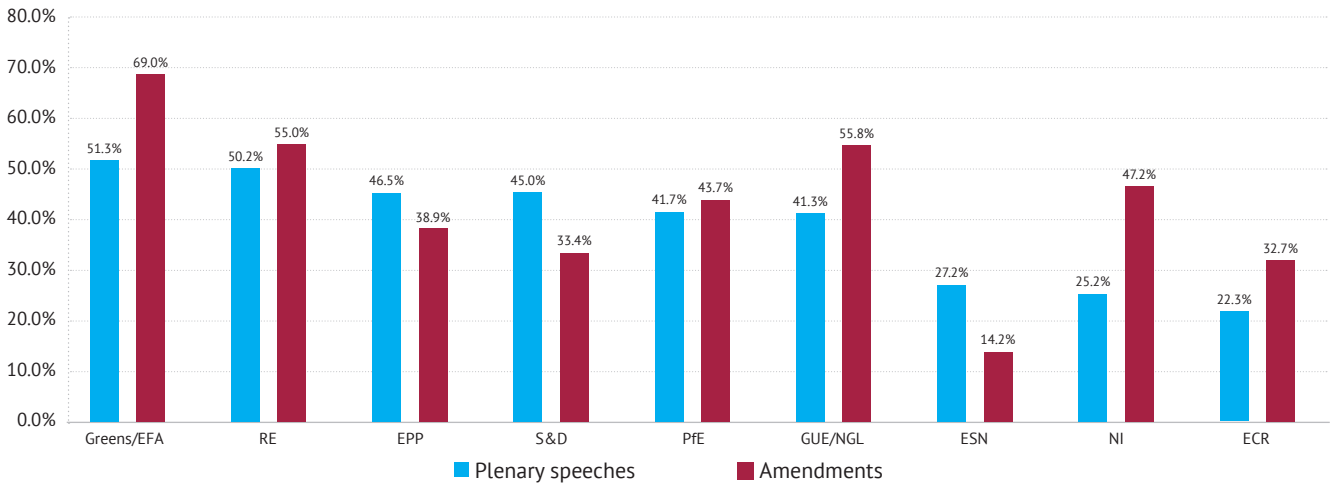
PER CAPITA NUMBER OF SPEECHES BY GENDER



Source: European Parliament; calculation and visualisation: Eulytix.

Graph 4

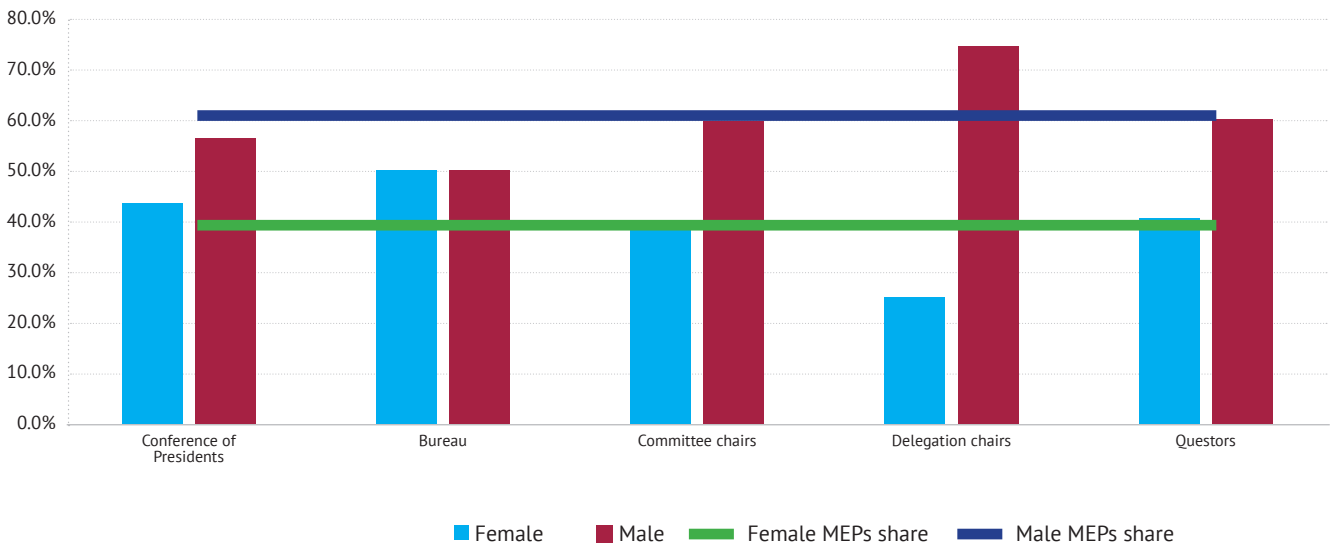
### LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY: THE SHARE OF FEMALE MEPs BY EP GROUP



Source: European Parliament; calculation and visualisation: Eulytix.

Graph 5

### SHARE OF FEMALE AND MALE MEPs IN DIFFERENT EP BODIES



Source: European Parliament; calculation and visualisation: Eulytix.





The **European Policy Centre** is an independent, not-for-profit think tank dedicated to fostering European integration through analysis and debate, supporting and challenging European decision-makers at all levels to make informed decisions based on sound evidence and analysis, and providing a platform for engaging partners, stakeholders and citizens in EU policymaking and in the debate about the future of Europe.

The **European Politics and Institutions** programme covers the EU's institutional architecture, governance and policymaking to ensure that it can move forward and respond to the challenges of the 21st century democratically and effectively. It also monitors and analyses political developments at the EU level and in the member states, discussing the key questions of how to involve European citizens in the discussions over the Union's future and how to win their support for European integration. The programme has a special focus on enlargement policy towards the Western Balkans, questions of EU institutional reform and illiberal trends in European democracies.

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