

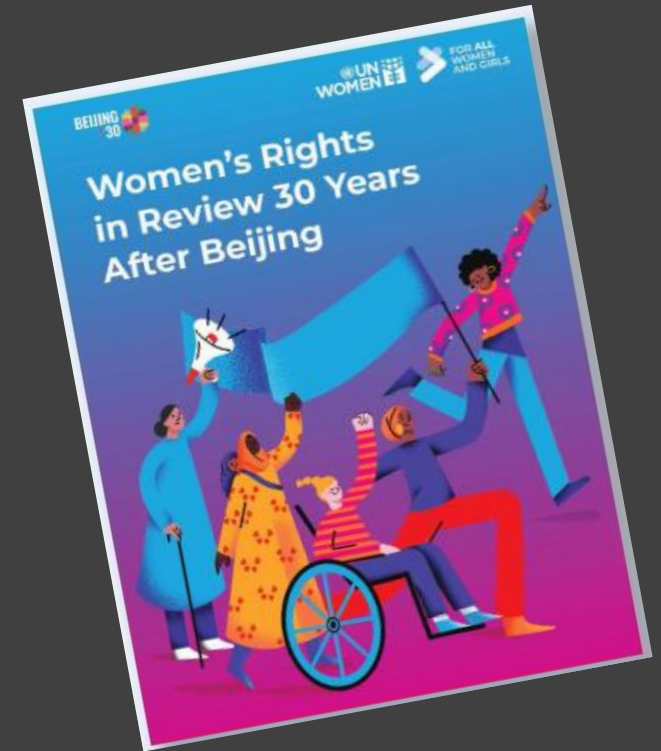
# The unwritten future of women in the 21st century

**Claudia Jesus-Rydin**

Disclaimer: the views expressed in this talk are personal and do not necessarily reflect those of the ERC

The world is more gender-equal  
than at any point in history

Progress\* has been made  
in areas such as  
education, health and legal rights



\*reported by **159** countries (out 189 that signed)

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/womens-rights-in-review-30-years-after-beijing-en.pdf>



# Treaty on European Union\*

## Article 1a

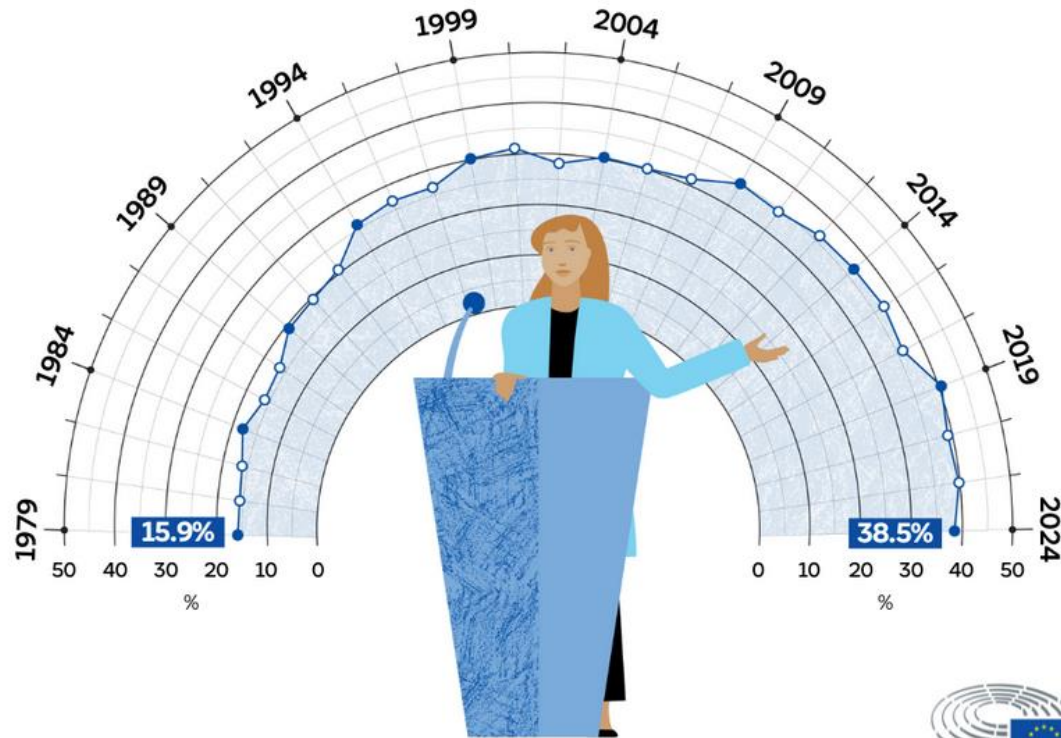
The Union is founded on the **values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights**, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States **in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.**

\*Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007. After ratification by Member States, the Treaty came into force on 1 December 2009

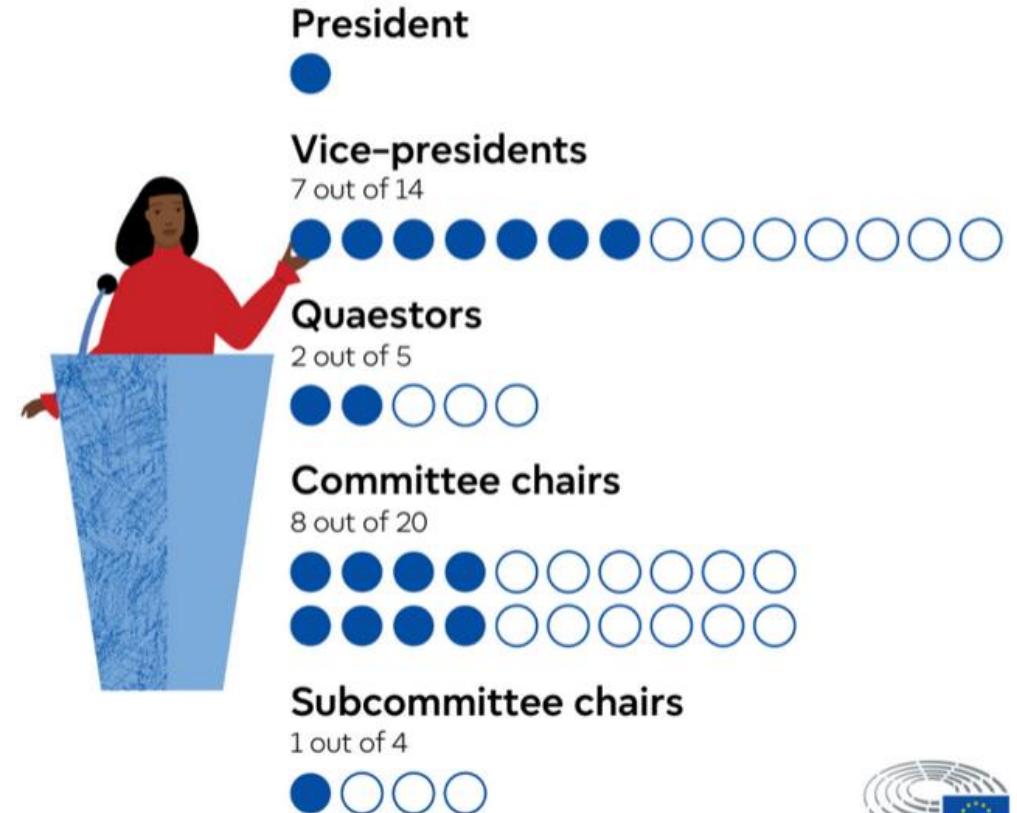


# Women in the European Parliament

## Share of **women** elected to the **European Parliament** (1979-2024)



## **Women** in top positions at the **European Parliament**





The future of European competitiveness:  
Report by Mario Draghi

Emphasized the **power of a diverse and inclusive workforce**, to boost Europe's competitiveness and economic growth.

[https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/draghi-report\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/topics/eu-competitiveness/draghi-report_en)



**“Talent has no gender, but opportunity too often does. The She Figures report is a wake-up call, women are driving progress in education, but still face too many barriers in research, innovation, and leadership. We need to change that—not just because it’s fair, but because Europe’s future depends on it. A truly competitive and innovative Europe is one where every mind, regardless of gender, gets the chance to thrive.”**

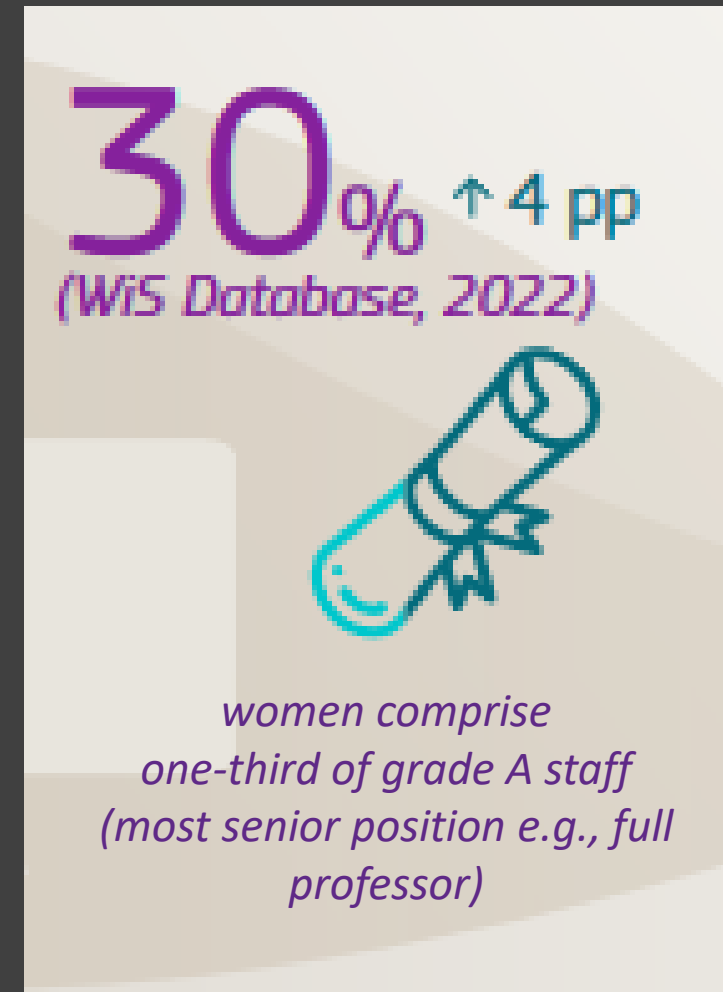
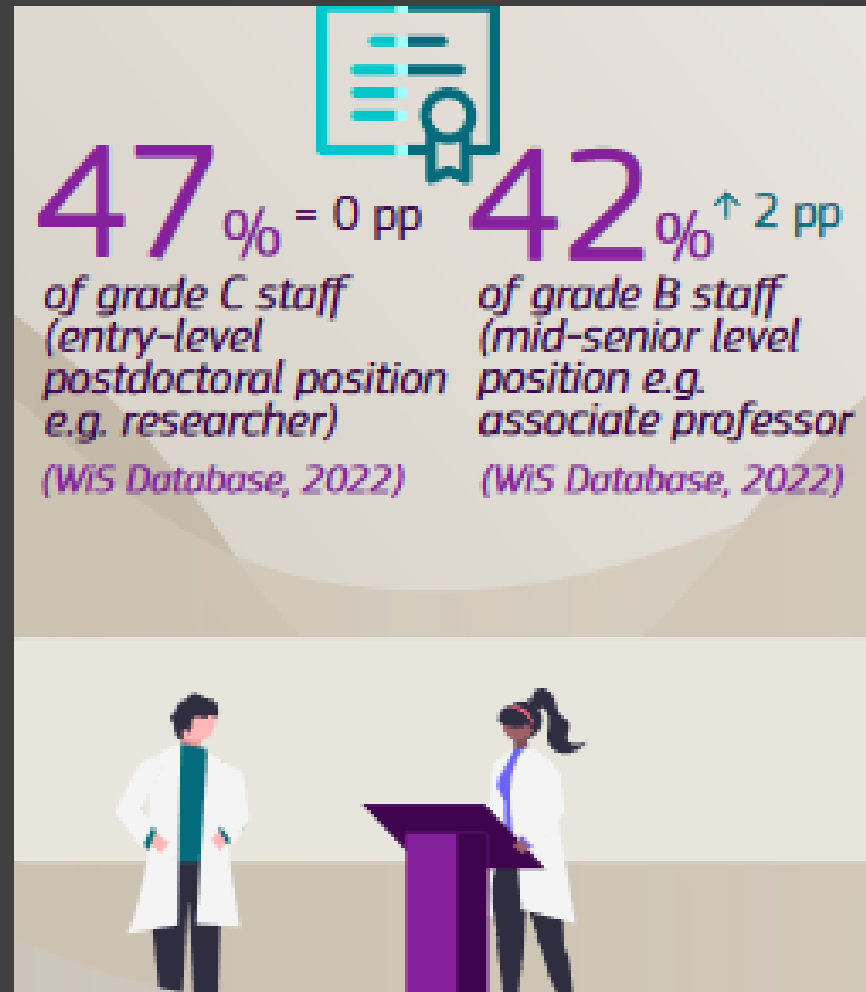
Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation,  
Ekaterina Zaharieva, 11 February 2025



# SHE FIGURES 2024

## Gender equality in research and innovation: *Employment*

Women are better represented in lower grades of academic positions, but progress is being made for the most senior position (i.e., 4 pp)\*



\*percentage point (pp) difference compared to values reported in She Figures 2021





# SHE FIGURES 2024

## Gender equality in research and innovation: *Decision making*

Women as heads of institutions make up 26%, while they represent 38% among the total number of board members at the EU level



*Women are still underrepresented among board members and leaders, but their representation is growing*


**38%** <sup>↑ 7 pp</sup>  
(WiS Database, 2022)







# Gender equality in research and innovation: *Research funding*

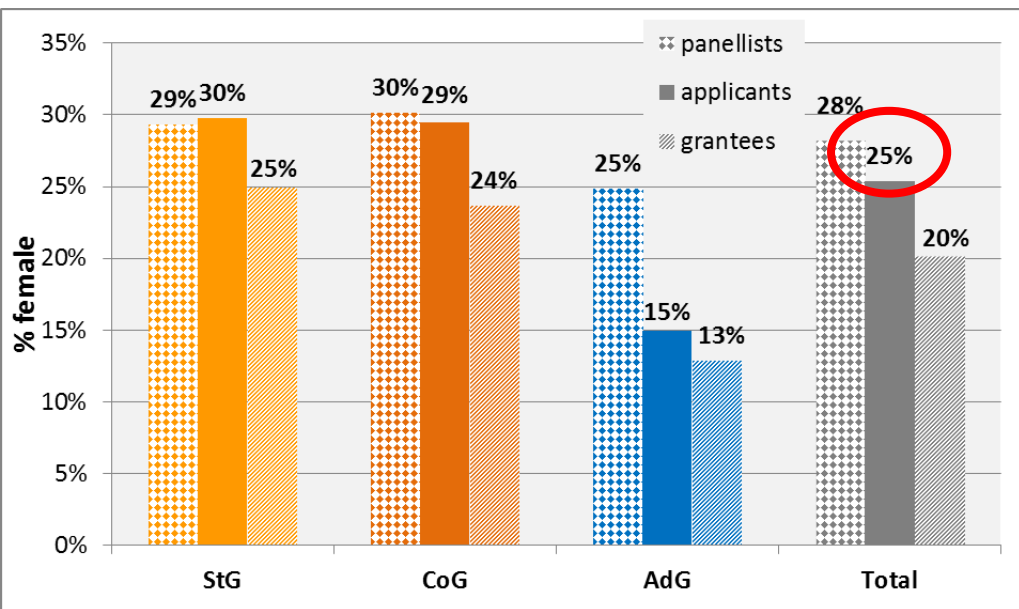
	Horizon 2020 (2014-2020)	Horizon Europe (2021-2027, ongoing)
Women <b>expert evaluators</b> in evaluation panels	42%	43.5% (↑ 1,5 pp)
Women participating in <b>expert groups</b>	43%	48.7% (↑ 5,7 pp)
Women <b>coordinators</b> in projects	23%	31% (↑ 8 pp)
Women <b>researchers</b> in projects	37%	37.6% (↑ 0.6 pp)

The representation of women varies according to the different funding programme

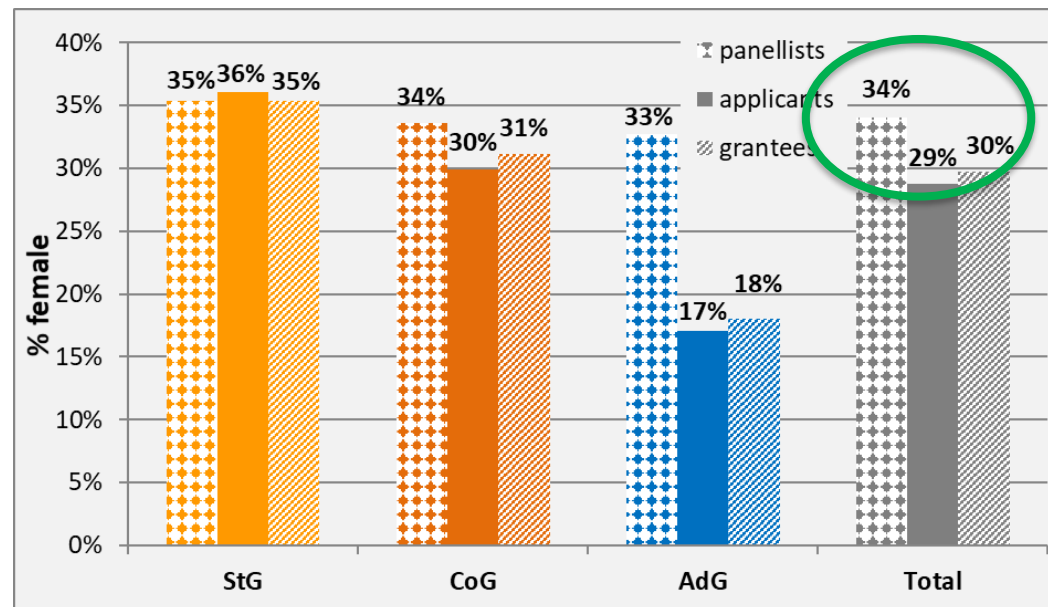


# Women participation at ERC

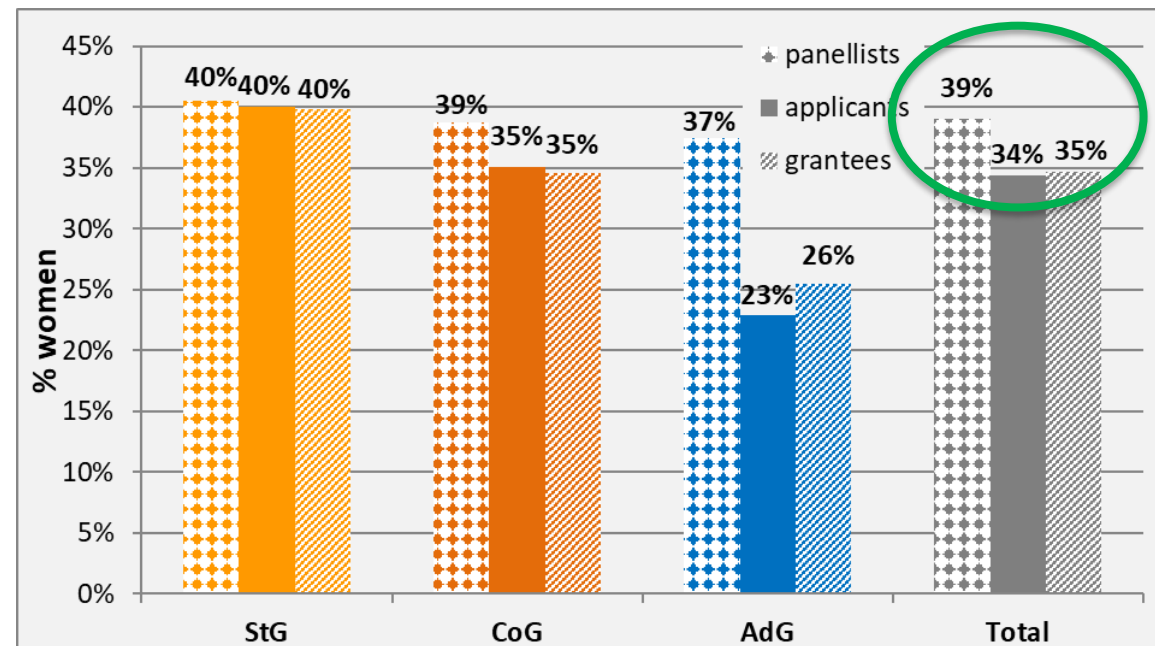
ERC Calls FP7 (2007-2013)



ERC calls H2020 (2014-2020)



ERC Calls Horizon Europe (2021-2023, ongoing)



# Gender equality in research and innovation:

## *Scientific associations*

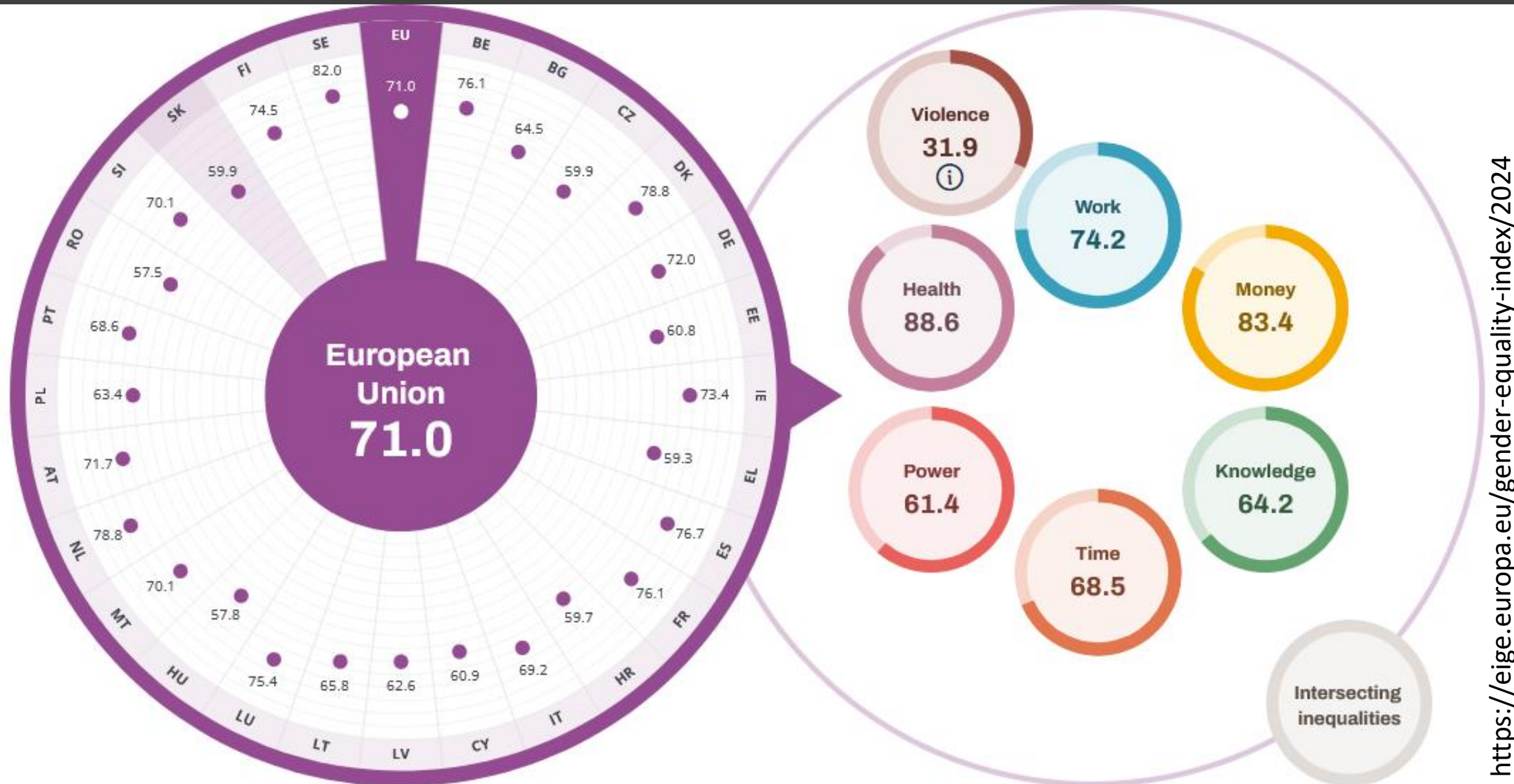
- In 2016 a small group of people decided to convene a session at EGU dedicated to promoting and supporting equality in geosciences (EOS3.1 Orals: Thu, 01 May, 10:45-12:30; Posters, 14:00-15:45)
- In 2018, Alberto Montanari proposed that an EDI working group is created at EGU. October 2018 EDI group at EGU is officially created
- April 2021 EDI group recommended to become a committee
- So much work and accomplishments!



It's Not All Gloom...



# EU Gender Equality Index: 2024 edition



# FACT CHECK IN EU

**More women than men finish higher education**, but are less represented in the labour market: 28% work part-time, compared to 8% of men

Career breaks: **~30% employed women had a work interruption for childcare reasons**, compared to 1.3% of men

Pay gap: **women** earn on average **13% less than men per hour**. In addition, 52% of women's working hours are unpaid, compared to 35% of men's

Pension gap: **17% women pensioners were at risk of poverty**, ~4 pp higher than the rate for men pensioners

**Violence: 30% women** experienced **physical or sexual violence**

Backlash is a reality...



Patriotic populism as guardians of 'democracy',  
'freedom of speech' and judiciary 'independence',  
and 'defending' women...



# Trad-Wives: Right-Wing Social Media Influencers

Tradwives grow social networks and expand audiences by monetizing right-wing ideologies and curating traditional versions of wife and mother.



The submissive '**Feminine not Feminist**' woman



# **toxic masculinity on social media**



# Female voters join the far-right and the failure of Identity Politics



“You might not like that women have the right to vote, but it's about winning long-term political victory.”  
Swedish far-right influencer



Political and ideological  
polarization divide and  
undermine societies

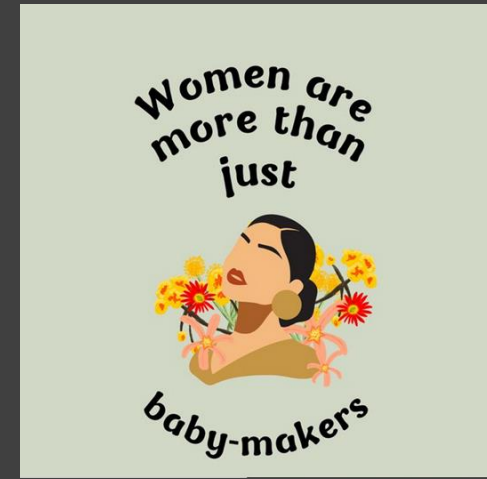
Less equipped to tackle  
growing global challenges



Moving beyond us-versus-them polarization, towards constructive conversations and building bridges is the **only way to win over polarization and extremism**



# Know and own your power!



- ❖ When VOTE and BUY
- ❖ Apply to leadership positions
- ❖ Be active in real-life communities, support grassroots actions
- ❖ Boycott social media - SERIOUSLY
- ❖ Support and press leaders to resist (governments, funders)
- ❖ Resist to revenge and extremism
- ❖ Choose kindness: help closing the perception gap



We hold the pen that writes the future...



Thank you!





# References

[Gender pay gap in Europe: facts and figures](#)

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20200109STO69925/understanding-the-gender-pay-gap-definition-facts-and-causes>

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender-based violence statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender-based_violence_statistics)

[One in four countries report backlash on women's rights in 2024 | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

[Why wokeness has pitched the left into crisis | International | EL PAÍS English](#)

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210203-1>

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender-based violence statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender-based_violence_statistics)

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdfs/news/expert/2020/3/story/20200227STO73519/20200227STO73519\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdfs/news/expert/2020/3/story/20200227STO73519/20200227STO73519_en.pdf)

<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2024-09-05/us-vs-them-understanding-the-roots-of-political-polarization-and-what-you-can-do-about-it/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/jan/29/from-le-pen-to-alice-weidel-how-the-european-far-right-set-its-sights-on-women>

[https://feps-europe.eu/inspiration/triumph-of-the-women-the-female-face-of-the-populist-and-far-right-in-europe /](https://feps-europe.eu/inspiration/triumph-of-the-women-the-female-face-of-the-populist-and-far-right-in-europe/)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/more-than-womens-work/202409/the-tradwife-trend-is-a-risky-throwback>

[Rollback and Resistance: How US-Based Global Health Organisations Are Responding to the Gender and Diversity Crackdown – Global Health 50/50 2024 Report – Global Health 50/50](#)