Index conference 2019

About the Conference

The conference will provide a forum for around 300 decision-makers and practitioners to discuss the findings of the Gender Equality Index 2019. We will get the new scores for gender equality in the EU, look at trends over time and show areas for improvement in the current political context.

A new feature of this year's Gender Equality Index is a special focus on work-life balance. The conference will explore the diverse ways women and men balance work and personal commitments. Aspects such as parental leave, flexible working arrangements and public infrastructure will be scrutinised and discussed by our panel speakers.

If you need additional information regarding the conference, please contact indexconference2019@eige.europa.eu

Conference videos EN/DE/FR

Part I 9:00-13:00

Part II 14:15-17:00
Presentations

Session 1: IS GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EU STILL MOVING AT A SNAIL’S PACE?

Session 2: DOES PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Session 3: PARENTAL LEAVE: CAN EVERYONE BENEFIT?

Session 4: FLEXIBLE WORK: HELPING OR HINDERING GENDER EQUALITY?

Agenda

Conference moderators:

- **Mira Banerjee**, Head of Knowledge Management and Communications, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- **Vincent-Immanuel Herr**, Author, moderator and activist, HERR & SPEER

08:00–09:00 Registration

09:00–09:05 Welcome

- **Inga Rosinska**, Director for Information and Outreach, Directorate-General Communication and Information, General Secretariat of the Council

09:05–09:30 Opening address

- **Virginija Langbakk**, Director, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- **Dimitrios Papadimoulis**, Vice President, European Parliament
- **Věra Jourová**, European Commissioner, Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality

09:30–11:00 IS GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EU STILL MOVING AT A SNAIL’S PACE?

This session will reveal the results of the Gender Equality Index 2019. We will see how far the EU and its Member States have progressed towards achieving gender equality since 2005.
11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–13:00 DOES PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

Access to infrastructure, such as health clinics, childcare, schools and public transport are crucial for work-life balance but impact women and men differently. This session will shed light on women's and men's access and use of public services and the dimensions (e.g. quality, affordability, accessibility) that are the most conducive for work-life balance for different groups of women and men.

Presentation by: Jolanta Reingarde, Programme Coordinator, Research and Statistics, EIGE

Panel:

- **Evelyn Regner**, Chair of the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM), European Parliament
- **Tiina Astola**, Director-General, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, European Commission
- **Joanna Maycock**, Secretary General, European Women’s Lobby
- **Carina Autengruber**, President, European Youth Forum

13:00–14:15 Lunch

Press conference

14:15–15:30 PARENTAL LEAVE: CAN EVERYONE BENEFIT?
Parental leave helps parents balance their caring duties with work life, but who is eligible? Which groups of women and men find themselves excluded from this entitlement and on which basis (age, family characteristics, employment, citizenship)? How can businesses encourage more men to take up parental leave?

Presentation by: Marre Karu, Researcher - Gender Equality, EIGE

Panel:

- Karin Strandås, State Secretary to the Minister for Gender Equality, Sweden
- Björn Sieverding, Board Member, NEFLA - Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations (NEFLA)
- Annemie Drieskens, President, COFACE Families Europe
- Koen Dedoncker, MenEngage

15:30–16:45 FLEXIBLE WORK: HELPING OR HINDERING GENDER EQUALITY?

Are flexible working arrangements the answer to all our problems when it comes to work-life balance? Or do they simply encourage employees to work longer hours from home? How much flexibility can businesses allow their staff? In this session, we will discuss flexible working in the context of the European Commission's Work-Life Balance Directive, which puts forward the right to request flexible working arrangements for caring purposes.

Presentation by: Davide Barbieri, Statistics Officer, EIGE

Panel:

- Philippe Seidel, Policy and European Parliament Liaison Officer, AGE Platform Europe
- Juliane Bir, Head of Trade Union Policy, European Trade Union Confederation
- Rebekah Smith, Deputy Director, Social Affairs Department, Business Europe
- Elke Heitmueller, Head of Diversity Management, Volkswagen AG

16:45–17:00 CLOSING REMARKS

- Virginija Langbakk, Director, EIGE
- Thomas Blomqvist, Minister for Nordic cooperation and Equality, Finland
Mira Banerjee is the Head of Knowledge Management and Communications at EIGE. She has a long career in international communications in various fields. Before joining EIGE in 2015, she worked for various international organisations, including the United Nations Refugee Agency, Nordic Council of Ministers and European Chemicals Agency. She has also worked as a journalist in Finland, with a special focus on scientific topics.

She has a Master’s Degree in journalism and mass communications from the University of Tampere, Finland.

Vincent-Immanuel Herr  
Author, moderator and activist, HERR & SPEER
Vincent-Immanuel Herr is an author, moderator, speaker, and activist from Berlin, Germany. His publications and political advocacy work relate to the fields of gender equality, youth empowerment, and European integration.

Since 2018, he has served as one of four HeForShe catalysts Germany, a national initiative led by the German National Committee of UN Women.

In 2018 is has received the Jean Monnet Prize for European Integration for his work on the #FreeInterrail campaign.

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Speakers

Inga Rosinska
Director for Information and Outreach, Directorate-General Communication and Information, General Secretariat of the Council
Ms. Inga Rosinska is currently Director of Information & Outreach at the Council of the European Union. From 2009-2013 she worked in the European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek’s Cabinet as a Spokeswoman and as his chief of Cabinet. From 2013 to 2018, she was leading the Human Rights Action Unit in the Directorate General for External Policies in the European Parliament. She is a former EU correspondent of Polish broadcaster TVN and news television TVN24 in Brussels (1999-2009).

Before coming to Brussels she used to work for numerous media outlets in Poland and for the ministry of European Affairs in the Department of promotion and information. She is an author of numerous articles about the functioning of the EU and twice a winner of the golden ‘European screen’ award, received for her reporting from Brussels.

Virginija Langbakk
Director, EIGE

Virginija Langbakk is currently the Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in Vilnius, Lithuania. EIGE is a regulatory agency of the European Union. It supports the EU and its Member States in promoting gender equality, fighting discrimination based on sex and raising awareness about gender issues.
Previously, Ms Langbakk worked as Deputy Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. In her capacity as a gender expert, she has been involved in bringing the gender perspective into the public sector at local, regional and national levels in numerous countries worldwide. At the helm of the European Institute for Gender Equality since 2009, she is responsible for the management of both the administrative and operational structures. Her leading role includes developing and implementing the Institute's strategic programmes of activities and budgets. She aims at positioning the Institute as the most important knowledge centre for gender equality in the EU.

Dimitrios Papadimoulis
Vice-President of the European Parliament, head of SYRIZA delegation

Dimitrios Papadimoulis was born in 1955 in Athens. He graduated from Varvakeio Junior High School of Athens and studied at the School of Civil Engineering of NTUA (National Technical University of Athens). He has worked as an engineer and business executive during 1980–2004. His first term in the European Parliament was in 2004–2009, shortly afterwards in the Greek Parliament (2009–2014), and he was re-elected as MEP in the 2014 European elections. In July of that year, he was elected Vice-President of the European Parliament with 42.1%, a percentage of positive votes, which in his second re-election in January 2017 reached 73.5%.

The new Bureau, in which Mr Papadimoulis continues to represent the Delegation of the Left, will run the European Parliament until 1 July 2019. He is the only Greek and the only representative from the Left at the Presidium of the European Parliament. He is also a regular member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) and a substitute member of the Committee on Regional Development (REGI).

Věra Jourová
European Commissioner, Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality
Věra Jourová was born in the Czech Republic. She is the European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality since 2014. Before that she served as Minister for Regional Development. From 2012 to 2013 she worked as a trainee solicitor in a law firm as well as the Managing Director and EU funds consultant. In 2012, she received the degree in Law (Mgr.) from the Charles University, Prague. In 2006–2011 Věra Jourová executed consultancy activities in the Western Balkans relating to EU accession.

In 2003–2006 she served as the Deputy Minister for Regional Development and in 2001–2003 she was the Head of the Department of Regional Development of the Vysočina Region. As the Secretary and Spokesperson of the Třebíč Municipal Office, Věra Jourová served in 1995–2000. She received her Master’s degree in theory of culture from Charles University Prague in 1991.

Blandine Mollard
Research Officer, EIGE
Blandine Mollard is a member of the Research and Indices Team at EIGE. Her work has focused on developing the measurement of the phenomenon of violence against women in the EU for the Gender Equality Index. She is the author of EIGE’s report on gender, youth and digitalisation that was prepared for the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, as well as several chapters of the 2019 edition of the Gender Equality Index focusing on work-life balance.

Before joining EIGE in 2016, she worked with research and statistics on gender issues in the Pacific Island Region for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and in the Gender Coordination Unit of the International Organization for Migration in Geneva.

Evelyn Regner
Chair of the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM), European Parliament

Evelyn Regner is a European politician of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and Member of the European Parliament, since she was firstly elected in 2009.

As trade unionist, Evelyn Regner’s main focus has always been on labour-related affairs, namely the improvement of workers’ rights and the reduction of unemployment. She dedicates her work fighting for more tax justice and reducing inequalities in Europe. She is the voice of workers and taxpayers when it comes to regulation of companies and financial markets, and is standing up for women's rights and gender equality.
In her current mandate, she was elected chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), member of the Conference of Committee Chairs (CCC) and member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON). Additionally she is also a substitute member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) as well as vice-head of the Austrian S&D-Delegation in the European Parliament.

Furthermore, Evelyn Regner is part of the Delegation for relations with the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia and the Delegation to the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and substitute member of the Delegation to the EU-Mexico Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Tiina Astola
Director-General, European Commission Directorate-General for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality


From 2007-2016 she served as the permanent secretary of the ministry. With the responsibility of the functioning of the Ministry and its sphere of activities (both international and domestic law drafting, courts, prosecutors, legal aid, enforcement etc.). As from February 2016 she works as Director-General - DG Justice and Consumers (JUST).
Joanna Maycock has been Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby since 2014. A lifelong feminist, Joanna has 25 years' experience in leadership positions in Civil Society; she led ActionAid International's work in Europe and was the first (and only) woman President of CONCORD.

Joanna is a leading figure in women's networks discussing women in leadership and feminist leadership, and was named one of the most influential women in Brussels by Politico newspaper in 2016. In 2018 and 2019, Joanna was named one of Apolitical's Top 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy.

@JoannaMaycock @Europeanwomen

Carina Autengruber is the President of the European Youth Forum and originally from Austria. Her academic background is in development studies, gender studies and political science and she has been working in a consulting company for more than 8 years.
From 2014 to 2016 Carina has been active in the Austrian National Youth Council as European Youth Delegate representing the voice of young people living in Austria on European level. In 2017 and 2018 Carina served as Vice-President of the European Youth Forum focusing on EU affairs.

Jolanta Reingarde
Programme Coordinator, Research and Statistics, EIGE

Jolanta Reingarde PhD has been a senior researcher/analyst at the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) since 2010. She leads the programme on research, statistics and indices. The development of the Gender Equality Index and annual progress reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU are two major research areas of the programme. Jolanta studied Sociology at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas (Lithuania), followed by a Ph.D on violence against women.

She also has wide experience researching EU gender equality policies, measurement of gender equality, gender equality and economy, and work-life balance.

Yoomi Renström
Member of the European Committee of the Regions and Mayor of Ovanåker, Sweden
Yoomi Renström has been mayor of the Municipality of Ovanåker (Sweden) since 2010 and is now President of the Municipal Council. She holds a degree in Literature, Psychology, and Information and Communication. From 2005 until 2006, she was a member of the Swedish parliament.

Member of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) since 2006, she has been a rapporteur on major dossiers, and was very involved in the preparation of the Code of Conduct on Gender Equality, that her political group (PES) adopted in May 2018. From 2015 to 2017, she was Chair of the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC).

Sylvain Renouvel
Director, Federation of European Social Employers

Sylvain holds a masters degree in labour law and human resources from the Sorbonne University and has a strong experience in industrial relations. He has been working in different organisations such as the French Building Federation, the Union of metallurgy industries, and Social services employers’ organisations, where he has been head of Social Affairs and head of European Affairs.
He also teaches labour law and industrial relations in several French universities. He has a broad knowledge of European social dialogue. He has been involved in the PESSIS projects, promoting Social dialogue in Social Services at EU level since 2013.

Carmen Gheorghe
President, E-Romnja

Carmen Gheorghe is a roma feminist and activist and currently the president of E-Romnja Association (The Association for Promoting Roma Women's Rights – a roma feminist NGO in Romania). She holds a PhD in Political Science on standpoint feminism, addressing roma women and politics of identities.

She has been engaged in civil society for the last 16 years and her main work for the last 10 years was focused on grassroots work, gender issues, intersectionality, politics of identity, violence against women/roma and the labour market.

Eva Kail
Expert in urban gender planning, City of Vienna
Eva Kail is an urban planner and has worked for the City of Vienna since 1986. She was the first head of the Women’s Office (1991-1998) and lead the Co-Ordination Office for Planning and Construction geared to the Requirements of Daily Life and the Specific Needs of Women (1998-2009). Since 2010 she works in the Executive Group for Construction and Technology - Competence Centre Overall Urban Planning, Smart City Strategy, Participation and Gender Planning.

She coordinated about 60 pilot projects in the fields of housing, mobility, public space, urban development and social infrastructure and is one of the leading administrative experts for gender planning in Europe.

Marre Karu
Researcher - Gender Equality, EIGE

Marre Karu is a gender equality researcher at EIGE. Prior to joining EIGE four years ago, she was a researcher at the Praxis Centre for Policy Studies in Estonia. She has 14 years of research experience, focussing on family and social policies from a gender equality perspective. Marre has carried out studies on the gender pay gap, work-life balance, parental leave and poverty. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Tartu in Estonia and an international Masters degree in social policy analysis from KU Leuven.
Karin Strandås is State Secretary to Minister for Gender Equality, with responsibility for anti-discrimination and anti-segregation, Åsa Lindhagen. Karin was born in 1974. She has extensive experience from Swedish politics such as State Secretary to the Minister for Culture and Democracy, Head of the Green Party Parliamentary Office. She has a long-term commitment to human rights issues and has a history within civil society organizations such as Action Aid and The Swedish Burma Committee. She has a master’s degree in political science from Uppsala University, with studies at the University of Sheffield.

Björn Sieverding
Board Member, NELFA - Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations (NELFA)

Björn Sieverding is Board member of NELFA, the Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations. Since 2016, he takes part in international conferences, holds workshops and key speeches on rainbow families’ issues all over Europe. He is responsible for the Network’s communication (website, newsletter etc.). In March 2019, Björn was elected Vice President.
Born in 1976, he grew up in Rhede, Germany. He studied in Leipzig and Dijon. Since his graduation (journalism), Björn has worked as news editor, anchor and reporter for the public radio (MDR and RBB). He’s married and has two foster children (8/3 years old). Currently, the family lives in Brussels.

Annemie Drieskens
President, COFACE Families Europe

Annemie Drieskens holds a Masters degree in Law. She is for over 30 years actively involved in social policy and especially family policy as member of the board of the Gezinsbond, the largest family organisation in Belgium. Since 2012, she is the President of COFACE Families Europe. Under her presidency, COFACE worked on the topic of Reconciling Work and Family Life, organized a European Employers Forum, published the European Reconciliation Package, pushed for the adoption of the Work-Life Balance Directive and focused on families in vulnerable situations. In 2014, COFACE gained the UN consultative status.

Annemie Drieskens is an active member of the multi-stakeholder platform on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU and she represents COFACE at numerous conferences and meetings advocating for family policy and defending the interest of families in their diversity in Europe. Since 2017 she is Honorary Consul for Finland in Belgium.

Koen Dedoncker
MenEngage
Koen Dedoncker is staff member of the Movement against Violence - vzw Zijn, specialized in prevention, campaigns and projects for everyone who can be confronted with domestic and sexual violence. He is also the chair of the Belgian Men Engage Network. This network is inspired by and linked with Men Engage Europe and Men Engage International. The network aims to question and break open gender stereotypes and wants to enhance the freedom and possibilities of men and women. The network brings together organizations who support and engage themselves in this philosophy.

Currently the network is working on a European project Equi-x to promote innovative strategies aimed at the (de)construction of gender identities and the involvement of boys and men in non-violent models of masculinity.

Davide Barbieri
Statistics Officer, EIGE

Davide Barbieri is a statistics officer at EIGE. Since 2016, he has been analysing data and providing statistical insights for the Gender Equality Index. He has also analysed areas of concern for the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and administrative data on gender-based violence. Previously, he worked as a senior researcher, developing evaluation techniques and evaluating public policies.
He has experience working with gender equality and labour market projects financed by the European Structural Funds, with a focus on the introduction of a gender perspective.

**Philippe Seidel**  
Policy and European Parliament Liaison Officer, AGE Platform Europe

Philippe Seidel Leroy works for AGE Platform Europe, Europe’s largest network of organisations of and for older people. He is responsible for AGE’s policy activities in the fields of employment of older workers and social protection, as well as gender equality. He also coordinates AGE’s relations with the European Parliament (EP).

Before joining AGE, he worked on children’s rights for UNICEF and the Belgian NGO Child Focus. His academic background is political science and human rights.

**Juliane Bir**  
Head of Trade Union Policy, European Trade Union Confederation
A graduate in Industrial Relations, Juliane Bir began her professional career as a social worker in France in 1998. She then engaged in the labour movement and worked for several years as officer in charge of the youth policy of one of the French trade union confederations. In parallel, she was elected to the Bureau of the European Youth Forum, achieving a mandate from 2003 to 2004.

In 2004, she became advisor and later senior advisor at the European Trade Union Confederation in Brussels. She was in charge of different dossiers such as Youth, Organising, Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Dialogue and Relations with EU Institutions.

She is now Head of Trade Union Policy and she coordinates ETUC priorities linked to, amongst others, Social Dialogue, Collective Bargaining and Gender.

Rebekah Smith
Deputy Director, Social Affairs Department, Business Europe
Rebekah Smith is Deputy Director in the Social Affairs department of BUSINESSEUROPE, managing the following policy areas: Sustainability, CSR & Diversity; Industrial relations, labour law & working conditions; and social/employment aspects of digitalisation. She has been working at BUSINESSEUROPE for ten years and in the field of EU affairs for fifteen years. She is a member of the management committee of the platform on EU implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. She coordinates employer members of the European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions.

Previously she was Policy and Communications Manager for a Brussels-based consultancy specialised in assisting UK SME representatives to be active on EU policy, as well as working for the EU Representation office of a UK region. Rebekah has a Master's degree in European Studies and studied at Hull University in the UK and Osnabrueck University in Germany.

Elke Heitmüller
Head of Diversity Management, Volkswagen AG

Elke Heitmüller leads the diversity management of Volkswagen Group. Her focus lies on the establishment of a worldwide diversity management. She is responsible for the strategic direction within the Group and is currently implementing a Group-wide awareness training for all leaders.
Before she took over different management tasks in the company, Elke Heitmüller worked as a Consultant and university lecturer in Berlin and Innsbruck. Apart from her expertise for promoting Corporate Diversity and equal opportunities, Elke Heitmüller is an expert for sales with a leadership background in commercial communication, direct sales and dealer development at commercial vehicles in Germany.

Thomas Blomqvist  
Minister for Nordic cooperation and Equality, Finland

Thomas Blomqvist (Swedish People's Party, SFP) is the Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality in Finland since 6 June 2019. He was elected Member of Parliament in 2007 and was Chair of the SFP Parliamentary Group in 2018–2019. He was appointed Chair of the SFP Party Council 2016–2018 and Deputy Party Leader 2005–2007.

In Parliament, Minister Blomqvist has been a member of the Defence Committee for almost the entirety of his time in office. For shorter periods, has also served in the Transport and Communications Committee, the Agriculture and Forestry Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and as Chair of the Committee for the Future. Minister Blomqvist is also a local councilor in his home town since 1993.

Minister Blomqvist, born in 1965, was a farmer and entrepreneur before entering Parliament. He still has his farm and home in Raseborg, in southern Finland, where he lives with his family.

Nikolina Brnjac  
State Secretary for Cooperation with the European Parliament, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
Ms Nikolina Brnjac is a State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. Her current portfolio includes relations of the upcoming Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU with the European Parliament, as well as other issues related to the Croatian Presidency.

She was a State Secretary at the Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure from 2017 to 2019, and a Vice President of the Intermodal Transport and Logistics Union at the Croatian Chamber of Commerce in 2015. She also worked at the European Commission as an Evaluator for Horizon 2020 projects.

Ms Brnjac has been pursuing an active academic career, first as a lecturer and subsequently as the Head of Intermodal Transport Department at the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences in Zagreb. She earned her PhD at the same Faculty and wrote numerous scientific articles in the area of transport.

Ms Brnjac was born on 11 July 1978 in Karlovac. She is married, and a mother of two sons.
Practical Information

The conference will take place on 15 October from 09:00–17:00 in the Justus Lipsius building, Rue de la Loi 175, 1048 Brussels. [View the map.](#)

Please be aware that to access the building, there is a tight security check. For a smooth start, you are encouraged to arrive at the venue at 8:00 am for registration.

Organiser

[European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)](#)

Hosted under the auspices of