

The stories shaping gender equality in Europe this summer



A very warm hello and welcome back to EIGE's Newsletter!

We're sure no one needs a reminder that summer has begun – with much of Europe in the grips of an on and off heatwave!

Staying on theme, here's what's hot at EIGE right now.

#EGEF2026: Ideas, employers and young voices meet



The countdown has begun for EIGE's third edition of the [Gender Equality Forum](#)!

On 17 November 2026, we will once again bring together diverse voices - from policymakers, business leaders, civil society activists, experts and young

professionals - to help shape the future of gender equality in Europe.

This year's Forum will have a special focus on engaging employers and young professionals covering three key thematic strands:

- Care at the heart of resilient economies
- Skills for innovation and potential of closing gendered gaps in talent
- The cost of gender gaps – and how to unlock gender equality as an economic accelerator.

#EGEF2026 will take place in Brussels, with in-person plenary sessions and workshops. It will also be livestreamed and accessible on EIGE's website.

To ensure a strong youth focus, EIGE is inviting 35 young people aged 18 to 30 to attend the Forum in person. The applications have now closed so we thank everyone who took the time to apply!

Further down in this edition of our newsletter, we take you from NATO's corridors of power to teenage girls' digital realities, via equal pay and a stack of summer reads on where Europe is making progress – and where more work – as ever – lies ahead.

Security decisions – still a men's club?



Security threats are evolving rapidly. The people deciding how Europe responds? Much less so.

In a post NATO Summit moment, here are [EIGE's latest figures](#), which show:

- 6 of 32 - Permanent representatives to NATO's North Atlantic Council are women
- 0 of 32 - Women currently make up NATO's Military permanent representatives

- 0 - Women have served as NATO Secretary General in the Alliance's history
- 20% - Women in NATO civilian leadership posts in 2024

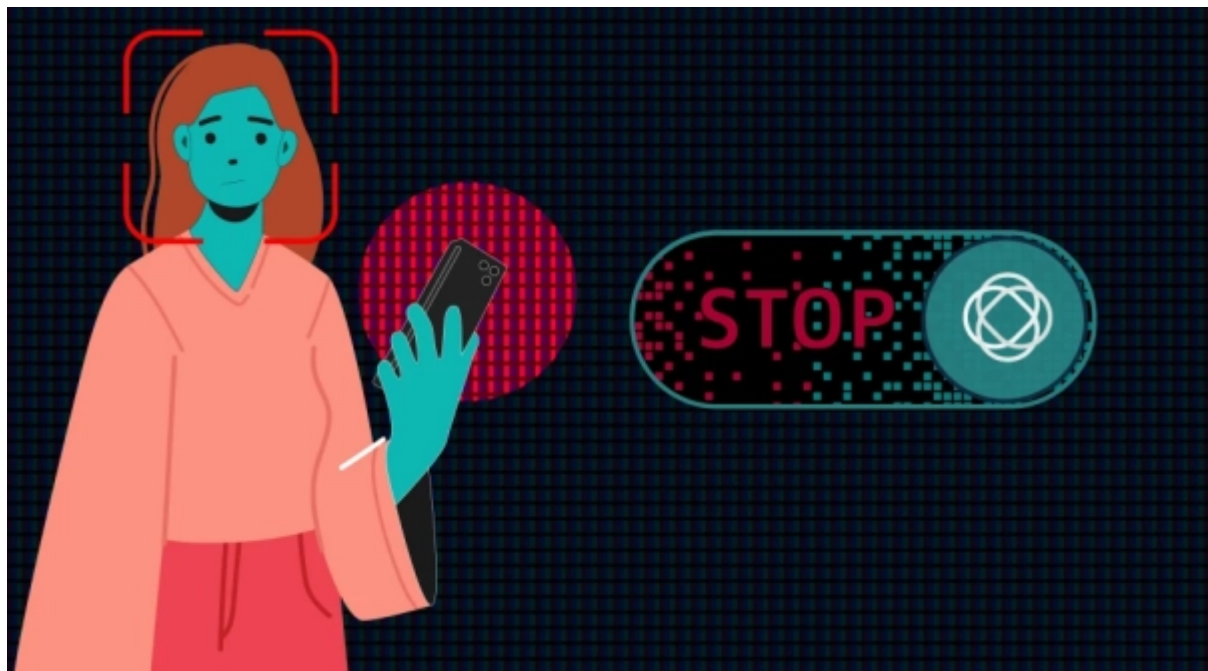
When decision-making tables stay homogeneous, perspectives are lost. At a time of geopolitical upheaval, Europe cannot afford blind spots.

We got in touch with [Diana Morais](#) – former Chair NATO Committee on gender perspectives and women, peace and security expert and she asserted that:

“Europe cannot afford narrow decision-making in an age of war. It weakens our security by narrowing what we see, who we listen to, the talent we mobilise and the options we consider. Under today’s threats – from military aggression and cyberattacks to disinformation and hybrid warfare – people are affected differently and respond differently depending on their roles, vulnerabilities, access to information, levels of trust, mobility, digital exposure and responsibilities within families and communities. If we fail to understand those differences, we fail to understand the operating environment.

Unpack the numbers in our new brief: [Gender Balance in the Security Sector](#).

Girls are telling us what online abuse really looks like



What does cyber violence look like through teenage girls' eyes?

Off the back of Council Conclusions under the Cypriot Presidency (end of June 2026), EIGE's report [‘From lived reality to policy action: Combatting cyber violence against girls in the EU’](#), gives 133 girls aged 13–18 from ten EU countries the floor. Their stories are difficult to read, but impossible to ignore.

One girl from Poland recalled a friend telling an older man online she was underage, only to receive the response: "It's okay, I don't mind."

Another discovered that an ex-partner had secretly taken intimate photos of her and feared they might reappear online.

These experiences are [not isolated incidents](#). They reveal an environment where technology evolves faster than the protection put in place to combat it. Our report comes to a clear conclusion: [prevention, accountability and safeguards](#) must keep pace with girls' digital lives. Very important and timely [read](#).

Equal pay is the law. Here's how to make it happen



Equal pay for equal work has been EU law for decades. Making it happen is another story.

To help employers prepare for the Pay Transparency Directive, the European Commission and EIGE have [updated EU-wide guidance on gender-neutral job evaluation and classification](#).

The aim is straightforward: help organisations identify hidden bias, strengthen pay fairness and become more attractive employers in an increasingly competitive labour market.

"The Pay Transparency Directive, adopted in 2023, is an important step forward in addressing the gender pay gap more effectively, which still amounts to over 11% in the EU," [says Pinuccia Contino, Head of the Gender Equality Unit at the European Commission's DG JUST](#).

EIGE Director: Conversations the EU can't ignore



EIGE's Director, Carlien Scheele, has been helping shape some of Europe's most pressing conversations on gender equality of late – bringing evidence, urgency and a clear sense that progress cannot be taken for granted.

At a recent high-level event Carlien emphasised that [Gender Balance on Corporate Boards Directive](#) marks a long-awaited shift from slow progress to real change, showing that gender equality in decision-making advances when clear rules, accountability, and binding measures are in place.

“Progress does not only happen because time passes. Progress happens when rules become clear. When accountability becomes visible.”

In a very different but equally pressing context, Carlien turned to [women's leadership in times of growing geopolitical uncertainty](#).

Her message: progress is fragile; and can quickly unravel, and when that happens, the consequences are serious: “Gains that took years to build can be reversed far more quickly than they were achieved.”

She has also sounded the alarm about cyber violence against girls, arguing that as [technology rapidly evolves, cyber violence against girls](#) is becoming more pervasive and harmful, requiring faster, coordinated action to prevent abuse and protect their safety online.

Across these debates, one message stands out: progress on gender equality cannot be assumed – it must be safeguarded and accelerated.

Who sets EIGE’s direction? Inside the Management Board



You would be correct in assuming that EIGE’s research, data and expertise help promote and advance gender equality across Europe. But behind the scenes, another key body helps steer the Agency’s direction: [the Management Board](#).

In an explainer, we demystify EIGE's Management Board: who its members are, what they do, and how they help shape the Agency's work to advance gender equality across Europe. Get to know how the Management Board works [here](#).

Summer reads. But make them policy...

Need something more substantial than a beach read this summer?

[EIGE's latest publications](#) unpack some of Europe's biggest questions:

Who carries care more?



Women still shoulder most unpaid care work, often at the expense of income, wellbeing and career opportunities. Drawing on the latest data, the publication shows how [unequal care responsibilities](#) shape labour market participation, pensions and financial independence throughout life.

Who shapes Europe's political decisions?

 European Institute for Gender Equality

In the European Parliament, women hold 60.1% seats in sociocultural committees and 36.1% in economic policy committees



Women's representation in politics has stalled – and in some places is moving backwards. Our [gender balance in politics brief](#) looks at where progress has slowed, what barriers remain, and why [gender-balanced leadership](#) matters for stronger and more representative democracies.

Who holds power in Europe's boardrooms?

 European Institute for Gender Equality

Women only account for around 10% of CEOs in largest listed companies



More women are reaching boards, but [executive power remains overwhelmingly male](#). By comparing trends across countries and sectors, the publication highlights where change is happening and where glass ceilings remain firmly in place. Read up on the [gender balance in business and finance now](#).

Who makes decisions in the EU? And how do we measure it?

Explore the data behind leadership, influence and representation. Our [Women and Men in Decision-Making: Methodological report](#) explains how EIGE tracks [decision-making positions](#) across institutions and



sectors, providing a clearer picture of who gets a seat at Europe's tables of power.

What happens when the rules stop working?



Gender equality depends on a strong [rule of law](#); where rights like equal pay, protection from violence, and access to justice are actually enforced. When that system weakens, inequalities grow, hitting those already facing barriers first. Check out our easy-to-understand explainer [here](#).

How is the EU turning solidarity with Ukraine into real action?



The [EU Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' Network contribution to EU solidarity with Ukraine](#) brings together nine EU agencies working to support people affected by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine - from [assisting displaced Ukrainians](#) to strengthening justice, security, and investigations into international crimes.

That's all for now. Keep up to date on all our socials. See you after the summer!

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Catalogue Number: MH-02-26-043-EN-Q ISSN: 2812-085X