

# Gender Policy Task Force

*Prospectus*



## FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE: TURNING GENDER INTO ACTIONS

Since the adoption of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) in 1995, gender equality has been recognised as a global priority guiding international efforts to advance women's rights and address structural inequalities. Within the European Union, this commitment is reflected as a [core value](#) and a key horizontal priority. In recent years, the European Commission has further strengthened this priority through a comprehensive framework, including the Gender Equality Strategies [2020-2025](#) and [2026-2030](#), legislative measures such as the [Work-Life Balance Directive](#), and the continued integration of gender equality across the [Framework Programmes](#) (FPs) for Research and Innovation (R&I). At the same time, gender mainstreaming is becoming more systematic, and increasingly binding, across EU policies and programmes. This evolution is also reflected in the EU budget, with gender mainstreaming expected to play a central role in the next [Multiannual Financial Framework](#) (MFF).

Despite this stronger policy framework and increased political attention, significant challenges remain in translating established principles into effective and measurable practices. Behavioural responses, organisational practices, structural barriers, and gender stereotypes dilute intended outcomes, even where formal compliance is achieved (Walby, 2005; Verloo, 2005). Moreover, as a recent CEPS paper highlights, **a disconnect between policy priorities and research agendas** limits the potential for research to meaningfully inform policy, making incomplete the feedback loop between policy and research ([Dell'Aquila & Nyoka, 2025](#)). Gaps in both implementation and evaluation persist across several key areas, including R&I itself, care and economic empowerment, health, and gender-based violence, as well as in the operationalisation of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Lombardo & Verloo, 2009). Across these domains, gender and intersectional mainstreaming are not yet applied in a consistent or systematic way, limiting their overall impact.

In response, CEPS is establishing a **Gender Policy Task Force** that will bring together key stakeholders to identify practical solutions to these implementation gaps and strengthen the integration of gender and intersectional perspectives in EU R&I programmes. Through a series of four structured hybrid meetings, the Task Force will address key thematic research priorities aligned with current EU policy developments, while supporting the development of actionable recommendations, promoting the exchange of good practices, and contributing to more coherent and accountable approaches to gender mainstreaming. In addition, the Task Force will integrate **perspectives from non-EU countries, particularly Low- and Middle-Income Countries** as a transversal component, with the aim of strengthening the sharing of best practices and fostering positive impacts on research cooperation.

## KICK-OFF MEETING

When: **28 May 2026 – 10:00-12:00 CET**

Ahead of the full cycle of meetings, a kick-off meeting will be organised to present the proposed thematic priorities and gather participants' feedback. This initial meeting will provide an opportunity to refine the scope of the Task Force, align expectations, and agree on its priorities, objectives, and working methods. This will also provide an opportunity to validate and refine the proposed themes, which remain indicative and may be adjusted in light of participants' perspectives and suggestions. Any revisions will reflect the collective input gathered during the kick-off meeting.

These topics have been identified in CEPS's recent paper as blind spots in Horizon Europe programme.

## FOUR TASK FORCE MEETINGS

Each meeting will last two hours and will feature the participation of experts, practitioners, policymakers, the private sector, civil society and institutional observers. The latter will act as a bridge between stakeholders who can contribute to discussions or activities planned. Each session will begin with a "reality check", drawing on concrete initiatives/case studies/projects to examine how gender and intersectional perspectives have been applied in practice, supported by relevant data. This will provide a practical entry point for discussion. The session will then move to an open exchange among participants. All meetings will be conducted under the Chatham House Rule, which also applies to the outputs of the Task Force.

### PROPOSED THEMES

**Meeting 1: Mainstreaming intersectionality in practice across different programmes (24 June 2026, 10:00-12:00 CET).** Discussions will focus on operationalising intersectionality in policies and programmes design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This includes rethinking formal tools like Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and the assessment of gender impacts in both ex ante impact assessment and ex post evaluation. The aim is strengthening the integration of intersectional approaches in EU funding and policy instruments, ensuring that gender equality measures address overlapping forms of discrimination linked to race, ethnicity, disability, age, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, and migration status.

**Meeting 2: Women's health (September 2026).** Discussions will focus on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, the gender dimension of chronic and non-

communicable diseases, mental health, and the need for more sex- and gender-disaggregated data in health systems and research programmes. The aim is advancing a gender-responsive approach to health policy, research, and innovation.

**Meeting 3: Economic empowerment of women: reinforcing the care economy (October 2026).** This session will explore the role of the care economy in advancing women's economic independence and tackling structural gender inequalities in labour markets. This session aims at addressing the unequal distribution of unpaid care work and proposing recommendations to improve working conditions in care sectors, ensure fair wages and social protection, and support policies that enable work-life balance, including childcare and long-term care provision.

**Meeting 4: Shedding light on emerging forms of gender-based violence (November 2026).** Discussions will focus on emerging and under-addressed forms of gender-based violence (GBV), such as online violence, workplace harassment, and violence in institutional settings, as well as the need for stronger data collection and cross-sectoral responses. The aim is to examine persistent gaps in addressing gender-based violence across EU policies, including prevention, protection, access to justice, and support services. The setting and topic of this meeting is strategic as November is the month we commemorate the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#). This meeting will strategically focus on emerging forms of GBV and how to tackle them.

## OUTPUTS

Following each meeting, a summary report and minutes will be prepared by CEPS staff and shared with participants for comments and approval. Once validated, a short policy brief (maximum 2 pages) will be produced, outlining the main insights and policy-relevant actions. At the conclusion of the Task Force's work, a comprehensive final report will be produced, consolidating key findings, strategic priorities and specific recommendations to support policy development and implementation, ensuring they are grounded in both expertise and inclusivity.

This will be complemented by a **practical recommendations toolkit**, supported by an implementation roadmap. The toolkit will aim to translate commitments on gender and intersectional mainstreaming into concrete and actionable practices, ensuring greater consistency and effectiveness in implementation. Where relevant, the outputs will also include targeted considerations for alignment with EU budgetary and programming frameworks, including the MFF, with a particular focus on advancing gender-responsive budgeting and reflecting gender and intersectional considerations more systematically within financial planning and allocation processes.

Relevant outputs will also be shared via a dedicated online space to support accessibility and wider use.

Together, these elements provide structured and replicable guidance that strengthens the systematic integration of gender equality and intersectionality across policy design, implementation, and funding schemes, ensuring that these principles are not only reflected in values and commitments, but embedded in practice.

## COMPOSITION

The Task Force will include:

- Academics and experts working on gender equality and R&I
- Policy and Advocacy Officers from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
- Policymakers and advisors from EU institutions
- Representatives from the private sector interested in and working on gender equality

## TIMELINE

The Task Force will be launched in May 2026 during the kick-off meeting and will run until the end of 2026. A draft report will be circulated to all participants to the Task Force in January 2027 for comments and possible revisions.

The final version of the report will be presented at the forthcoming CEPS Ideas Lab in March 2027.

## GOVERNANCE

Each meeting of the Task Force will be chaired by an independent expert, invited by CEPS.

The Rapporteurs of the Task Force are Marta Dell'Aquila, Researcher, CEPS, and Rukudzo Irene Nyoka, Research Assistant, CEPS.

## CONTACT US

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