Towards Gender-Inclusive Digital Policy

AI and Gender Equality in the Workplace

11 June 2025
Brussels, Belgium

FEPS
FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE STUDIES

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Plenary Session

Salle des guichets/ 13h00-15h00

13:00 – 13:15	**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Christina Kampmann, SPD Parliamentary Group in the State Parliament of NRW/ Member of the board of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation
László Andor, Secretary General, Foundation for European Progressive Studies

13:15 – 13:55	**KEYNOTE**

Ivana Bartoletti - is Vice President, Global Data Privacy and AI Governance Officer at Wipro, the leading international information technology, consulting, and business process services company. An internationally recognised thought leader in privacy, AI governance, and responsible technology, Ivana serves as an expert for the Council of Europe, where she co-authored a pivotal study examining the impact of artificial intelligence on gender equality. In her latest book, A Digital Union: Based on European Values (published by FEPS), Ivana delves into forward-thinking strategies for shaping Europe's digital and AI policy landscape. She is a co-editor of The AI Book, released by Wiley, which serves as a comprehensive resource for investors, entrepreneurs, and fintech innovators. She also authored An Artificial Revolution: On Power, Politics, and AI (published by Indigo Press), which explores AI at the intersection of technology, geopolitics, governance and ethics.

13:55 – 14:55	**PANEL DISCUSSION (FEPS-led fringe event)**

Speakers:
- **Christina Kampmann,** SPD Parliamentary Group in the State Parliament of NRW/FES Board Member
- **Ivana Bartoletti**, AI Governance Officer, Wipro
- **Isabelle Schömann,** Deputy General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
- **June Lowery**, Senior Expert and Equality Coordinator, DG CNECT, European Commission

Chair: **Laeticia Thissen,** Senior Policy Analyst on Gender Equality, FEPS

14:20 – 14:55	**Q&A**
14:55 – 15:00	**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Parallel Workshop 1 (FEPS-led fringe event)

Between the AI cracks:

Can the EU lead the way in shaping an inclusive Digital Ecosystem?

Salle des guichets /15h30-17h00

As AI systems become increasingly embedded in our societies, their influence on equality and non-discrimination raises pressing concerns. The EU AI Act represents a major step toward comprehensive regulation, yet significant challenges remain – particularly where automation, bias, accountability, and fundamental rights intersect. From workplace surveillance to algorithmic discrimination, there is a critical need to ensure that AI promotes equality rather than reinforcing existing inequalities.

At the same time, Europe's digital ecosystem is rapidly evolving, with mounting pressure to remain competitive through innovation and technological leadership. Despite this momentum, intersectional barriers continue to restrict the participation of women – especially those from marginalised communities – resulting in a lack of diverse leadership in digital development. To foster a truly inclusive and resilient digital future, Europe must invest in education, mentorship, and leadership pathways that elevate women from underrepresented groups to positions of influence in shaping digital transformation.

This workshop will examine both the risks and opportunities AI presents for advancing equality across key EU policy areas such as employment, healthcare, education, and security. It will highlight the urgent need for specific regulations on workplace AI to protect workers' rights, while emphasising the critical role of intersectionality in building a fairer digital ecosystem. How can policymakers balance the growing power of Big Tech with the imperative to ensure AI systems are fair, transparent, and accountable?

In this workshop, we would therefore like to address and discuss the following questions:

- What structural and cultural barriers prevent women – especially from marginalized groups – from participating in and leading the development of Europe's digital ecosystem?
- How can EU digital and AI strategies be shaped to ensure gender-responsive innovation and equitable access to opportunities in tech-driven sectors?
- What role can education, funding, and mentorship play in increasing the presence and influence of women in AI research, digital entrepreneurship, and policy-making?
- How can intersectional gender perspectives be integrated into the design, deployment, and regulation of digital technologies to create more inclusive systems?
- What concrete actions should European institutions and industry leaders take to ensure that the digital transformation actively promotes gender equality and social inclusion?

Parallel Workshop 1 (FEPS-led fringe event)

Between the AI cracks:

Can the EU lead the way in shaping an inclusive Digital Ecosystem?

Salle des guichets /15h30-17h00

15:30 – 15:35 **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Agnes Hubert, Gender Five Plus President and FEPS Scientific Council member
Laeticia Thissen, Senior Policy Analyst on Gender Equality, FEPS

15:35 – 15:50 **PRESENTATION OF "SHAPING A FEMINIST FUTURE FOR AI":**

Presentation of the research and policy recommendations by **Victoire Olczak,** author of *Shaping a Feminist Future for AI* (Gender5+)

15:50 – 16:35 **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

Speakers:
- **Carina Ohlsson,** Member of the European Committee of the Regions (Lidköping Municipality), Rapporteur of the Opinion on the EU's Roadmap on Women's Rights
- **Eva Gengler,** Co-founder of feminist AI
- **Ilkka Penttinen,** Policy Adviser, Eurocadres
- **Victoria Cummings,** Senior Manager, European Chips Diversity Alliance
- **Victoire Olczak,** Researcher, Gender5+

Chair: **Sophie Jacquot**, Professor at UCLouvain and EU Gendering Chairholder

16:35 – 16:55 **Q&A**

16:55 – 17:00 **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Agnes Hubert, Gender Five Plus President and FEPS Scientific Council member

Parallel Workshop 2

AI-Driven Work: Implications for Women's Safety, Health, and Equality

Agora /15h30-17h00

The widespread use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across various sectors offers significant opportunities for innovation. However, its implementation in workplaces introduces risks as reduced autonomy, control and surveillance and can lead to isolation, worker turnover, deskilling and stress. Furthermore, it can also introduce gender-specific risks, as for example discrimination; that can negatively affect workers' safety and well-being. Adopting a gender-sensitive approach to occupational safety and health (OSH) is therefore crucial to creating healthier, more sustainable and inclusive workplaces. When hardware and software designs fail to account for the diverse needs of workers, particularly women, they can exacerbate inequality, bias, and exclusion. Poorly designed AI systems may reinforce harmful stereotypes, misjudge women's capabilities, and create unsafe work environments. Inadequate ergonomic features can also lead to discomfort or prevent workers from performing certain tasks. Additionally, AI tools can inadvertently enable gender-based violence, especially in digital spaces, if they fail to effectively address or identify harassment.

AI-driven surveillance and performance tools, such as algorithmic management systems, are increasingly used in workplaces for tasks like hiring, tracking productivity, and monitoring emotions. While these technologies aim to enhance efficiency, they can unintentionally amplify workplace inequalities, especially for women. This can occur during recruitment, daily tasks, and emotional assessments, leading to unfair judgments and reinforcing biases.

The use of robotics and AI can also deepen workplace inequalities, particularly when these technologies overlook the specific needs of women or workers with physical differences. This oversight can result in uncomfortable work setups or exclusion from certain tasks. For example, robotics designs that fail to consider the needs of some workers may cause ergonomic problems or limit access to particular roles.

While gender-based violence is not a new issue, its shift to the digital realm has made it more pervasive and damaging. Cyberviolence is emerging as a major form of workplace harassment against women. As digitalization progresses, violence and harassment must no longer be seen as merely in-person issues; they are increasingly happening through technology.

In this workshop we would therefore like to address and discuss the following questions:

- How can AI systems be regularly monitored for gender bias to ensure they do not negatively affect workers' safety and well-being?
- What steps can be taken to raise awareness of the gender-specific risks posed by AI and robotics in the workplace?
- What actions can be taken to support women who are adversely affected by AI-driven surveillance and performance tracking at work?
- What policies and safety standards should be developed to protect workers from bias, exclusion, and harassment as new technologies are introduced in the workplace?
- How can existing workplace regulations be adapted to ensure that new technologies do not contribute to gender-based violence or harassment at work?

Parallel Workshop 2

AI-Driven Work: Implications for Women's Safety, Health, and Equality

Agora /15h30-17h00

15:30 – 15:35	**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**
	Meike Büscher, FES Nordic Countries
15:35 – 16:05	**PRESENTATIONS**

- **Silvia Semenzin,** scholar and activist, whose work focuses on gender-related violence, digital rights, and emerging technologies, AI Forensics
- **Johannes Anttila,** Adviser, European Parliament
- **Hilde Nagell,** Adviser, Agenda, Norway

16:05 – 16:35	**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

- **Anastasia Karagianni**, Researcher, Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB)
- **Miriam Klöpper,** Researcher, NTNU, Norway

Chair: **Aline Brüser,** Gender Equality Advisor, ETUC

16:35 – 16:55	**Q&A**
16:55 – 17:00	**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Parallel Workshop 3

AI Literacy: Trade Union/Civil Society Perspective

Brel /15h30-17h00

As defined by the AI Act, AI literacy includes the skills, knowledge, and understanding needed for entities and individuals to deploy AI systems responsibly, while recognizing their potential opportunities, risks, and harms. There is a strong need to demystify AI systems, making their operations and potential risks more understandable.

While AI offers significant benefits, its quasi-autonomous decision-making also presents risks for workers and society. For instance, AI-driven hiring and firing processes have occurred without human oversight, raising concerns about fairness and accountability. Moreover, biases in AI systems can systematically exclude women, reinforcing existing workplace inequalities. These applications, which are prevalent across both public and private employment contexts, carry significant implications for fundamental rights and organizational accountability. Such biases (based on historical data) often manifest in hiring algorithms, performance evaluations, and promotion recommendations, disproportionately disadvantaging female employees. Addressing these issues requires transparent algorithmic design, rigorous auditing, and inclusive data practices to promote fairness and equity in the workplace.

By strengthening AI literacy, trade unions and civil society organisations can push for greater transparency, fairness, and worker protections, ensuring that AI enhances workers' rights and opportunities rather than creates new threats and reinforces existing inequalities. Particular attention should be paid to the differing responsibilities and expectations placed on public versus private sector actors, including issues of transparency, procurement, and due diligence.

In this workshop we would therefore like to address and discuss the following questions:

- How can AI literacy programs be effectively designed to empower workers and trade unions to critically engage with AI systems in the workplace?
- How do biases embedded in AI systems reinforce existing gender inequalities in the workplace, and how can AI literacy help mitigate these effects?
- What are the fundamental rights' implications of the use of AI in employment practices—such as hiring, monitoring, or dismissal?
- What are the differences in transparency and accountability expectations for public versus private sector actors in their use of AI systems, especially in employment-related decisions?
- What role can trade unions and civil society organisations play in shaping regulatory and ethical frameworks for responsible AI use at work?

Parallel Workshop 3

AI Literacy: Trade Union/Civil Society Perspective

Brel /15h30-17h00

15:30 – 15:35	**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS** **Anna Kraft**, FES UK/Ireland
15:35 – 16:05	**PRESENTATIONS**

- **Dr Marta Lasek-Markey,** Researcher, ADAPT, Ireland
- **Brian McDowell,** Head of Communication and Public Affairs, FSU, Ireland
- **Patricia Shaw,** Researcher, CEO of Beyond Reach, UK

16:05 – 16:35	**ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

- **Charlotte Schlüter,** Policy Officer, German Trade Union Confederation, DGB
- **Mariam Rechchad**, Policy Officer, European Network of Equality Bodies, Equinet

Chair: **Monique Munarini,** Researcher, the University of Pisa

16:35 – 16:55	**Q&A**
16:55 – 17:00	**CONCLUDING REMARKS**