



AN END TO MANELS II: CLOSING THE GENDER GAP AT EUROPE'S TOP POLICY EVENTS

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CONTENTS

1

INTRODUCTION

3

METHODOLOGY

5

TOPICS AT HIGH-LEVEL
CONFERENCES IN
EUROPE

14

RECOMMENDATIONS

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A panel discussion during the Aurora Dialogues in Yerevan, Armenia on April 23, 2016.

INTRODUCTION

This brief is the second in a two-part series from the Open Society Foundations on closing the gender gap at Europe's high-level policy events. The first brief, *An End to Manels*, examined the composition of panels. This brief takes a closer look at the topics discussed,¹ speakers' gender,² and the frequency with which various topics have been discussed at 23 conferences in Europe between January 2012 to December 2017. The brief covers the same 23 conferences as our previous report, but over a slightly longer period.

This brief includes 122 events, 20,615 speaking roles, and 4,601 conference panels.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. **Economic issues dominate debates at high-level conferences in Europe.** For example, in 2017 for every panel that debated gender issues, 16 discussed economic issues.
2. **Gender and discrimination are seldom discussed at these conferences.** For example, in 2017 of the 921 panels in our dataset, 13 were on Gender and 11 on Discrimination.
3. **Men dominated speaking roles at these conferences;** three out of four speaking roles were occupied by a man.
4. **Even for a male-dominated stage, some topics are extraordinarily male,** with almost a complete absence of women engaged in speaking roles. For example, the share of men in speaking roles exceeded 75 percent for six topics: Foreign Policy; the EU; Crime, Terrorism and Security; Economic Situation; Environment, Climate, and Energy Issues; and Technology.
5. **There is an incredible underrepresentation of male speakers on the topic of gender at these conferences.**
6. **Technology and the EU are ascending topics.** For example, from 2012 to 2017 the number of panels on these topics increased around four times.
7. **In recent years, high-level conference topic choices have been asynchronous with the public's top concerns, at times.**

1 There is no uniform definition for high-level conferences. We use it to mean conferences at which policy-makers and opinion leaders interact.

2 We recognize that gender is not a binary concept. For the purpose of this report, we are identifying as 'women' people whose name is identified with this gender in the culture they are from.

When women do participate in security debates they are often funneled into discussions about women, peace and security. We need to get women talking about the hard issues as well.

Pauline Massart

Deputy Director of the EU Office, Compagnie Européenne d'Intelligence Stratégique

I find it disturbing that it is mostly women on the panels and mostly women in the audience at conferences on gender. And it's a subset of women, 'glam chicks' talking about 'glam chicks'; we're talking about women on boards, women in media; we don't talk enough about less advantaged women, these women and their views are not properly represented.

Monika Queisser

Head of Social Policy, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Do cyber-security conferences begin to sound the same because they're all by white geeky men? Probably. Would it be richer if they were more diverse? Certainly.

Peter H. Chase

Senior Fellow, German Marshall Fund

Women have to have more credentials than men — more qualifications, a higher status position, usually later in their career — to be asked to speak on a 'hard' topic like security or economics. They have to prove the value of their words and views, whereas male counterparts are assumed to know what they are talking about from the start.

Heather Grabbe

Director, the Open Society European Policy Institute

METHODOLOGY

We collected the data for this report by downloading conference agendas from websites. We then contacted the conference hosts to request they confirm the accuracy of the data.³

THE 23 CONFERENCES IN OUR DATASET ARE:

1. **Belgrade Security Forum**-Serbia
2. **Berlin Foreign Policy Forum**-Germany
3. **Bled Strategic Forum**-Slovenia
4. **Bruegel Annual Meetings**-Belgium
5. **Center for European Policy Studies Ideas Lab**-Belgium
6. **Chatham House London Conference**-United Kingdom
7. **European Council on Foreign Relations' Annual Council Meeting**-Italy (2014), Belgium (2015), the Netherlands (2016), Berlin (2017)
8. **European Strategy and Policy Analysis System Annual Conference**-Belgium
9. **Forum 2000 Conference**-Czech Republic
10. **Freedom Games**-Poland
11. **German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum**-Belgium
12. **Globsec Bratislava Forum**-Slovakia
13. **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**-Poland
14. **Lennart Meri Conference**-Estonia
15. **Munich Security Conference**-Germany
16. **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Forum**-France
17. **Prague European Summit**-Czech Republic
18. **Tatra Summit**-Slovakia
19. **The Riga Conference**-Latvia
20. **Vision Europe Summit**-Germany (2015), Portugal (2016), Italy (2017)
21. **World Economic Forum Annual Meeting**-Switzerland
22. **World Forum for Democracy**-France
23. **Wroclaw Global Forum**-Poland

³ We were able to verify the accuracy of online data with conference hosts except for data from the Wroclaw Global Forum and the World Forum for Democracy.

We did not apply a strict methodology for selecting the 23 conferences for this brief. However, we made sure to include international conferences, hosted in a range of countries by organisations from different sectors. We also ensured that the conferences we chose covered a range of international topics and included speakers from a variety of European countries.

This brief identifies (1) topics discussed at the 23 conferences, (2) the frequency each topic was discussed and (3) the share of men or women who held speaking roles in those discussions, disaggregated by topic.

This brief also compares topics discussed at high-level conferences in Europe, with the top concerns facing Europeans, each year. We use Eurobarometer's survey question: 'What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?',⁴ for the comparison.

Evidence provided in this brief is intended to improve the quality of debate at high-level conferences by raising important questions about the range of topics debated and by showing that unequal time is provided for women to speak.

If you're a woman attending a conference or participating on a panel, it's not an option not to speak. I'm going to say something in every single meeting. It's not just about your presence; it's about your participation. We shouldn't look only at numbers; we should look at an analysis of speaking time.

Monika Queisser

Head of Social Policy, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

⁴ Standard Eurobarometer 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88 accessed on August 15, 2018
<http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&instruments=STANDARD>

TOPICS AT HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCES IN EUROPE

Table 1 contains an overview of the data, which covers six years, from 2012 to 2017. For some conferences, we do not have a complete dataset for all six years. This is because some conferences came into existence after 2012 (i.e. Vision Europe Summit or CEPS Ideas Lab), or datasets were not available to us. The strength of our data set is its size in aggregate: 122 events, 20,615 speaking roles and 4,601 conference panels. The dataset is robust enough to draw some conclusions about the frequency with which topics have been discussed at international, high-level conferences in Europe in the past six years.

TABLE 1. Number of panels per conference, 2012-2017

CONFERENCE NAME	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TOTAL
Belgrade Security Forum	19	22	20	20	22	26	129
Berlin Foreign Policy Forum	13	6	6	7	8	11	51
Bled Strategic Forum	9	15	18	18	18	24	102
Bruegel Annual Meetings	7	5	7	8	13	11	51
Center for European Policy Studies and Ideas Lab	—	—	45	46	45	54	190
Chatham House London Conference	—	—	7	15	17	20	59
European Council on Foreign Relations' Annual Council Meeting	—	—	16	13	18	20	67
European Strategy and Policy Analysis System Annual Conference	—	6	17	11	19	20	73
Forum 2000 Conference	60	62	89	86	44	32	373
Freedom Games	—	—	14	43	18	34	109
German Marshal Fund's Brussels Forum	23	26	29	27	26	33	164
Globsec Bratislava Forum	21	36	37	37	34	30	195
Human Dimension Implementing Meeting	18	16	20	20	25	22	121
Lennart Meri Conference	20	24	18	22	21	23	128
Munich Security Conference	15	19	23	24	26	20	127
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Forum	40	30	49	65	79	79	342
Prague European Summit	—	—	—	13	24	29	66
Tatra Summit	—	10	13	17	21	14	75
The Riga Conference	15	15	17	16	23	11	97
Vision European Summit	—	—	—	8	18	16	42
World Economic Forum Annual Meeting	269	250	234	249	306	405	1,713
World Forum for Democracy	38	29	33	36	45	31	212
Wroclaw Global Forum	21	17	17	27	14	19	115
TOTAL	588	588	729	828	884	984	4,601
TOTAL EXCLUDING 'OTHER'	547	545	687	775	811	921	4,286

The titles of the 4,601 panels as they appeared on conference agendas were the starting point of this analysis. In order to arrive at a standard list of topics from over four thousand 'organic' session titles, we clustered all session titles into categories. We used an algorithm that filters out keywords for this exercise.⁵ We created a one to four word description of each session-topic, which we call Detailed Key Words. Detailed Key Words consist of main terms taken from the session's title. This brought the number of topics down to 93 Detailed Key Words.⁶ For sessions that did not indicate a thematic-topic, such as Closing Session, Welcome Remarks, or agenda items about logistics, we used the category Other. If we exclude the category Other from our dataset, the number of panels in our dataset is: 4,286.

Then we further reduced the number of categories into a single term that we call Key Words. Key Words reflect the main topic of the session, in our view. We did not use an algorithm for this, but did this manually. For example, for a panel entitled 'Which democratic governance in a globalized world?' the Detailed Key Words were Democratic Governance and the Key Word was Democracy. As we were not present at the majority of the over four-thousand panels, over six years, we had to make some judgments on if, for example, a given panel discussion was centered around democracy or governance. Our judgment call in this case was that the discussion was intended to delve primarily into democracy issues. We recognize that this leaves room for error, and that panel discussions

with multiple speakers inevitably do not stay clearly within a single topic-boundary. However, we think the methodology employed here will allow us to identify major topics that were discussed and identify trends across this large dataset.

Our dataset of over four-thousand sessions allows us to make an additional comparison regarding how conference-topics relate to the public's attitudinal top concerns in Europe. For this comparison, we used Eurobarometer data. Eurobarometer asks Europeans: 'What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?' Respondents can answer by choosing two out of 13 topics that they deem to be of most concern. We were aware of Eurobarometer's 13 categories when devising our Key Words. In cases where we saw similar language between Eurobarometer topics and the Key Words we arrived at using the algorithm, we opted for similar terminology. For example, we could have used Migration, Immigration, Asylum or Refugees as the single term to describe a common cluster of topics in the agendas of the 23 conferences. We opted for Immigration as the Key Word; however, we could not make perfect matches between both sets of topics. In cases where there was no shared language, we created Key Words that in our view characterized the topic, as communicated in the conferences' agendas. For example, Culture and Technology are Key Words that were derived in this way. In the end, we arrived at 14 Key Words, meaning that for the purposes of this brief we will describe over 4,000 panels via 14 Key Words. Since the terminology, Key Words

A lot of higher-up women in the military and defence sector tend to be guarded about discussing gender; there is a feeling they will lose credibility if they talk about gender rather than focusing on their area of expertise.

Pauline Massart

Deputy Director of the EU Office, Compagnie Européenne d'Intelligence Stratégique

⁵ We used the word-prediction algorithm 'N-grams', which is a widely applied tool in speech and language analysis. It uses probability theory to process and group all combinations of adjacent words of specific length in the source text (in our case panel name). 'N-grams' capture the language structure from a statistical point of view, projecting which word is likely to follow the given one. The algorithm was applied to 2,605 panels (which included all conferences) to generate groups of wording (the 93 Detailed Key Words) to guide our thinking on how to cluster panels into topical groups. From there, we evaluated the session manually and coded these manually.

⁶ Annex 1 includes the algorithm-generated Detailed Key Words. The list was generated based on a cross section of 2,605 panels.

sounds technical, going forward, we will use the terminology: 'topics', instead. Thus, we will look at 14 conference topics in the following analysis.

Frequency of topics per panel, 2012-2017

Each of the 23 high-level conferences has its own unique number of sessions; some have many more sessions than others. For this analysis, we decided to look at the aggregate of all panels, at all conferences, from 2012 to 2017. **Table 2** displays the 14 topics that were discussed during these years. The unit of measurement is the absolute number of panels on a topic, in descending order.⁷

Ascending, descending, encapsulated and ubiquitous topics

Over the six years covered in this brief, Economic Situation was discussed by far the most at the 23 high-level conferences. Indeed, only three topics account for more than 50 percent of all panels in our dataset: Economic Situation, Democracy and Foreign Policy. More than half the speaker roles (53 percent) at these conferences were devoted to those three topics, according to our dataset.⁸

We see that some topics have been ascending since 2012. Topics such as the EU, Technology, Immigration, and Health and Social Security show the fastest growth. In some years, the number

TABLE 2. Topics per panel at 23 high-level conferences, 2012-2017

TOPICS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TOTAL
Economic Situation	149	163	167	195	198	213	1,085
Democracy	84	75	130	89	101	126	605
Foreign Policy	67	78	104	88	72	89	498
EU	22	42	56	63	73	85	341
Crime, Terrorism, and Security	32	33	41	80	68	61	315
Culture	57	45	49	51	49	58	309
Environment, Climate, and Energy Issues	37	35	43	52	54	62	283
Technology	19	18	24	27	44	87	219
Education	19	16	19	50	43	25	172
Health and Social Security	16	16	22	26	34	51	165
Immigration	4	2	9	16	40	19	90
Media	25	10	7	16	9	21	88
Gender	11	8	8	10	12	13	62
Discrimination	5	4	8	12	14	11	54
TOTAL							4,286

LOWEST

HIGHEST

⁷ The category 'other' is excluded from the topical analysis. This brings the panel count for this table to 4,286.

⁸ Given the large number of panels at the World Economic Forum, we wanted to see if this conference was highlighting economics excessively in the dataset. However, when we exclude this from the set, the top three topics remain the same, only the order changes as follows: Democracy, Economic Situation, and Foreign Policy.

of panels dedicated to these issues more than doubled. The number of panels on Immigration in 2016 was 2.5 times more than in the previous year. This was likely a reaction to the large influx of refugees in 2015, which shows that high-level conferences have the capacity to respond, at least somewhat, to current events.

Gender and Discrimination are infrequently on the agenda at high-level conferences in Europe. Together these two topics were debated in less than 3 percent (116 panels) of the over 4,000 panels. The panels that did take place were concentrated at just a few high-level conferences. In 2017, for every panel that convened on gender issues, there were 16 economy-related and 10 democracy-related panels. Overall, discrimination was discussed at even fewer of the 23 high-level conferences. In 2016, there were only 14 panels that discussed issues related to discrimination, whereas every fourth panel across the 23 high-level conferences was dedicated to Economic Situation and every eleventh to Foreign Policy or the EU. Moreover, our data shows that while the absolute number of panels dedicated to Discrimination grew slightly from 2012 to 2017, the percentage of panels that discussed Discrimination in the same period actually stagnated between one and two percent. This is because the total number of panels increased in our dataset over the same period.

Table 3 and **Table 4** illustrate the number of panels and the number of conferences dedicated to the issues of Gender and Discrimination, respectively.

Table 4 also shows that Gender was discussed at only seven and Discrimination was discussed at only six conferences maximum, in a given year. There is little to no growth over the last six years.

In contrast, Economic Situation and Democracy were nearly ubiquitous topics, discussed frequently across many of the 23 high-level conferences. Together these two topics were debated at 1,690 (almost 40 percent) of the over 4,000 panels we reviewed.

‘Exclusively’ male-topics

Male speakers dominated the over 4,000 panel discussions. As our previous brief indicated, and the expanded dataset used for this brief confirms, high-level conference speakers were 75 percent male overall at the 23 conferences. The share of men in speaking roles exceeded 75 percent regarding six topics between 2012 and 2017. Gender was the only topic for which male panel speakers were not in the majority on average in our dataset. In fact, men were surprisingly scarce on panels regarding Gender and occupied only 22 percent of speaking roles.

TABLE 3. Number of panels addressing Gender or Discrimination, 2012-2017

TOPICS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Gender	11	8	8	10	12	13
Discrimination	5	4	8	12	14	11
Total number of panels in our dataset	547	545	687	775	811	921

TABLE 4. Number of conferences addressing Gender or Discrimination at least once, 2012-2017

TOPICS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Gender	6	4	4	6	7	6
Discrimination	2	3	4	4	6	3
Total number of conferences in our data set	15	17	21	23	23	23

TABLE 5. Number of panels addressing Democracy or Economic Situation, 2012-2017

TOPICS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Democracy	84	75	130	89	101	126
Economic Situation	149	163	167	195	198	213
Total number of panels in our dataset	547	545	687	775	811	921

TABLE 6. Number of conferences addressing Democracy or Economic Situation at least once, 2012-2017

TOPICS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Democracy	12	12	15	15	17	18
Economic Situation	12	15	13	17	19	17
Total number of conferences in our data set	15	17	21	23	23	23

The most gender-balanced topic discussed at over 4,000 panels was Discrimination. The share of speaking roles occupied by women was 42 percent. Men occupied 58 percent of those speaking roles. Women occupied at least 30 percent of speaking roles in only 6 topics: Gender, Discrimination, Culture, Immigration, Health and Social Security and Education. **Table 7** looks at the gender composition of speakers for 14 topics.⁹

If we look at **Table 8**, we see that the share of women speaking about these 14 topics in 2012 as compared to 2017, women took on an increased number of speaking roles on the topics of Crime, Terrorism and Security; Environment, Climate and Energy Issues and Education in 2017. However, despite women's increased representation on these panels, men were still overrepresented in speaking roles at high-level conferences on these topics. In 2017, there was only one women speaker for every three male speakers at the Crime, Terrorism and Security related panels. For every two men talking about Environment, Climate and Energy Issues, one woman occupied a speaking role.

TABLE 7. Share of male and female speakers per topic at the 23 high-level conferences, 2012-2017

TOPICS	FEMALE %	MALE %
Foreign Policy	18%	82%
EU	20%	80%
Crime, Terrorism, and Security	21%	79%
Economic Situation	22%	78%
Environment, Climate, and Energy Issues	23%	77%
Technology	24%	76%
Media	26%	74%
Democracy	28%	72%
Education	31%	69%
Health and Social Security	31%	69%
Immigration	33%	67%
Culture	34%	66%
Discrimination	42%	58%
Gender	78%	22%
TOTAL FOR ALL TOPICS	25%	75%

LOWEST

HIGHEST

⁹ The category 'other' is excluded. This brings the total count of speaking roles for this table to 19,882.

Europeans' concerns vs topics discussed at high-level conferences

We were interested in understanding if the topics addressed at high-level conferences in Europe were also those topics that are of most concern to Europeans. The method we chose to investigate this question was to cross-reference attitudinal data collected by Eurobarometer. We selected Eurobarometer's survey question on the main concerns of Europeans at the EU level: "What

TABLE 8. Share of female speaking roles in 2012 and 2017

SHARE OF FEMALE SPEAKING ROLES	2012	2017
Crime, Terrorism and Security	12%	28%
Environment, Climate, and Energy Issues	18%	31%
Education	27%	45%

LOWEST HIGHEST

TABLE 9. Share of female speaking roles occupied by women per conference, 2012-2017*

CONFERENCE NAME	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	AVERAGE OF THE EVENT
Belgrade Security Forum	29%	35%	31%	28%	36%	33%	32%
Berlin Foreign Policy Forum	16%	14%	28%	28%	36%	29%	25%
Bled Strategic Forum	14%	19%	21%	25%	22%	26%	21%
Bruegel Annual Meetings	0%	11%	21%	21%	27%	25%	17%
Center for European Policy Studies Ideas Lab			14%	22%	21%	27%	21%
Chatham House London Conference			26%	36%	42%	38%	36%
European Council on Foreign Relations' Annual Council Meeting			27%	25%	29%	44%	31%
European Strategy and Policy Analysis System Annual Conference		9%	25%	40%	27%	40%	28%
Forum 2000 Conference	26%	22%	15%	21%	21%	16%	20%
Freedom Games			20%	25%	23%	26%	24%
German Marshall Fund's Brussels Forum	24%	17%	22%	31%	36%	33%	27%
Globsec Bratislava Forum	9%	12%	12%	8%	15%	20%	13%
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting	45%	54%	51%	56%	46%	54%	51%
Lennart Meri Conference	11%	15%	11%	18%	20%	21%	16%
Munich Security Conference	8%	15%	14%	18%	17%	23%	16%
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Forum	36%	26%	25%	43%	40%	35%	34%
Prague European Summit				22%	17%	22%	20%
Tatra Summit		5%	10%	10%	29%	20%	15%
The Riga Conference	7%	25%	20%	27%	17%	20%	19%
Vision Europe Summit				26%	31%	13%	23%
World Economic Forum Annual Meeting	20%	22%	21%	24%	26%	31%	24%
World Forum for Democracy	28%	34%	40%	40%	44%	43%	38%
Wroclaw Global Forum	17%	14%	15%	22%	24%	18%	18%
AVERAGE OF THE YEAR	19%	21%	22%	27%	28%	29%	

LOWEST HIGHEST

*This table is an updated version of Table 1 in the publication *An End to Manels*. The above data differs from our past report in some cases by a few percentage points because the data in the original report relied on online data only. For this report, we were able to crosscheck data with the majority of conference hosts. This table includes the panels we categorized as Other (such as Closing Session, Welcome Remarks, Keynote Speech).

do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?" as a means of gaining insights.¹⁰ Eurobarometer's question offers 13 standard options. The respondent can choose their top two concerns from the 13 options in the Eurobarometer survey:

1. Climate Change
2. Crime
3. Economic Situation
4. Energy Supply
5. EU's Influence in the World
6. Immigration
7. Pensions
8. Rising Prices/Inflation/Cost of Living
9. Taxation
10. Terrorism
11. The Environment
12. The State of Member States' Public Finances
13. Unemployment

We juxtaposed the two categories of topics, (1)

the topics we developed for this brief and (2) Eurobarometer's classifications, below in **Table 10**.

The two lists overlap only in part. Neither the Eurobarometer survey questions, nor the 14 topics derived from the 23 conferences are the 'correct' collection of salient topics. High-level conferences are, however, discussing a wider range of issues than the number of concerns Eurobarometer permits a respondent to express. For example, Europeans could not express concerns about discrimination, education, technology or culture via the Eurobarometer question. However, politics and public debates in the media often discuss identity or discrimination, such as the #MeToo debate.

High-level conferences should have the freedom to address issues that are not currently top concerns of the public. Conference hosts are often think tanks with mission statements. They have an obligation to tackle longer-term issues, and to do so consistently in many cases. This should not prevent conference hosts from being aware of attitudinal data. Conference hosts should make knowledgeable and intentional choices about which

TABLE 10. Eurobarometer topics compared with high-level conference topics

TOPICS AT HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCES IN EUROPE	EUROBAROMETER'S MAIN CONCERNS AT EU LEVEL
Crime, Terrorism, and Security	Crime, Terrorism
Culture	
Democracy	
Discrimination	
Economic Situation	Economic Situation, Rising Prices/Inflation/Cost of Living, Taxation
Education	
Environment, Climate, and Energy Issues	The Environment, Climate Change, Energy Supply
EU	The State of Member States' Public Finances
Foreign Policy	EU's Influence in the World
Gender	
Health and Social Security	Unemployment, Pensions
Immigration	Immigration
Media	
Technology	

¹⁰ Standard Eurobarometer 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, accessed on August 15, 2018
<http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&instruments=STANDARD>

TABLE 11. Eurobarometer Main Concerns of Europeans*, 2012-2017

CONCERNS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Immigration	8%	16%	24%	58%	45%	39%
Terrorism	4%	6%	11%	25%	32%	38%
Economic Situation	53%	45%	33%	21%	20%	17%
The State of Member States' Public Finances	32%	26%	25%	17%	17%	16%
Unemployment	36%	36%	29%	17%	16%	13%
Climate Change	3%	4%	7%	6%	8%	12%
Crime	6%	8%	7%	8%	8%	10%
EU's Influence in the World	7%	6%	9%	6%	10%	9%
The Environment	3%	4%	6%	5%	6%	8%
Rising Prices/Inflation/Cost of Living	16%	12%	10%	7%	8%	7%
Pensions	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Energy Supply	4%	4%	6%	3%	3%	3%
Taxation	6%	7%	6%	3%	4%	3%

* 'What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?', percent of the EU. Data is taken from the November Eurobarometer edition for each year.

LOWEST

HIGHEST

topics to address and the frame in which the topics are debated when setting their agendas.

We hope that the following comparison will help conference hosts identify recent attitudinal trends, even though we are restricting the analysis to a single polling question. This exercise is meant to be illustrative.

We can see that the concerns of Europeans have changed significantly in six years. We also see ascending issues such as Immigration, which peaked in 2015 alongside Terrorism. In this time frame, Unemployment has been a descending issue. Some topics are consistently of little concern in this period, such as taxation, energy supply or pensions.

If we now compare which topics were most discussed at high-level conferences with the Eurobarometer data we can see some divergence and a buffered interest from conference hosts as compared to the public.

For example, we see a spike in public concern for Immigration in 2015 during the large influx of refugees to Europe. With some lag time, in 2016, high-level conferences also increased their discussions of this issue. However, the different magnitude of the increase and the relative importance of the topic is thrown into relief in **Figure 12**. The European public was far more concerned with the topic than the 23 high-level conference hosts on average. In the following figures, 'importance' when relating to high-

In Brussels, I'm more concerned about lack of diversity in race than in women. I almost never see a person of color on a panel, that concerns.

Peter H. Chase

Senior Fellow, German Marshall Fund

As a woman at these events, you must ‘sit at the table.’ You have to get over the ‘imposter syndrome’ and actively participate in these events. Of course a lot depends on the moderator, some will actively pick on women to ensure diversity, while others will flat out ignore questions from female participants. I’m not aware of any formal guidance for moderators in places like Brussels despite the huge volume of events that take place there. There should be a guide for moderators at events to ensure proper diversity (gender and otherwise) and inclusion in how the events are run.

Pauline Massart

Deputy Director of the EU Office, Compagnie Européenne d’Intelligence Stratégique

level conferences refers to the percentage of panels on a specific topic relative to the total number of panels in our dataset for a given year.

The same diverging trend between high-level conference topics and public concerns is visible when it comes to Terrorism. According to Eurobarometer’s poll, since 2015 Terrorism has been the second most important topic after Immigration, however high-level conference agendas do not give the topic the same importance.

We can also see that there are descending topics according to Eurobarometer’s survey, such as Economic Situation. Unemployment has also become less of a concern for citizens since 2012. However, this issue had a steady presence at the high-level conferences in our sample.

TABLE 12. Importance of Immigration at high-level conferences and according to Eurobarometer, 2012-2017

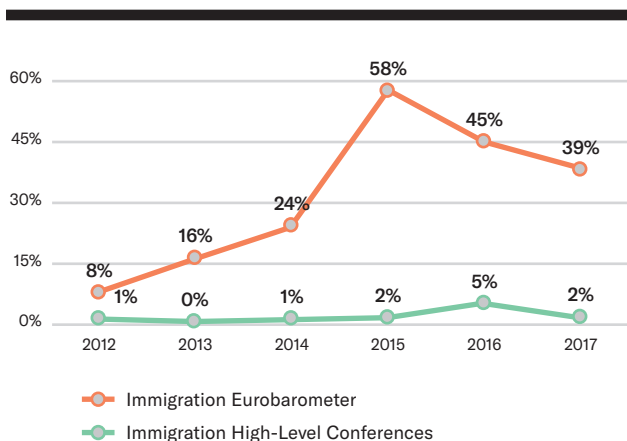


TABLE 13. Importance of Terrorism, Crime and Security at high-level conferences and according to Eurobarometer, 2012-2017

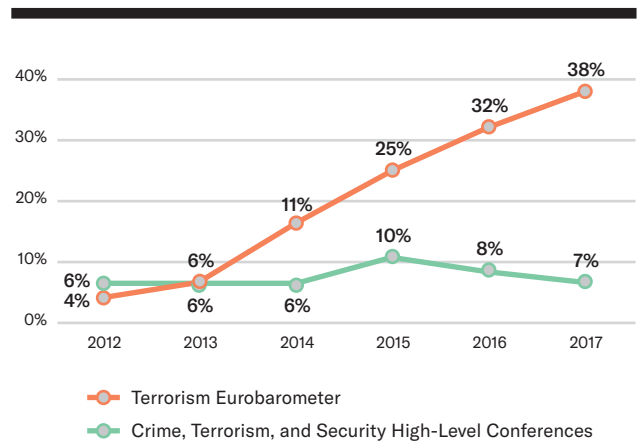
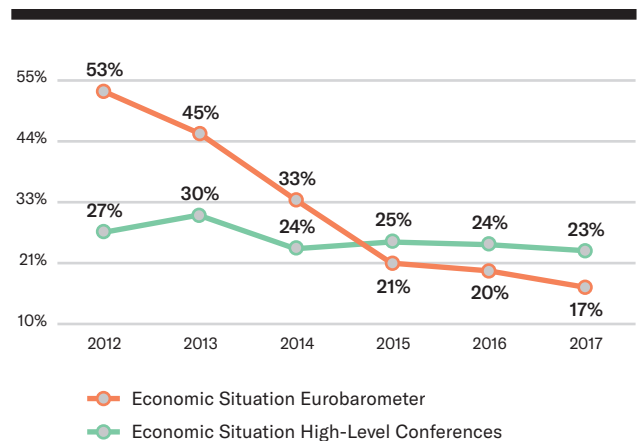


TABLE 14. Economic Situation at high-level conferences and according to Eurobarometer, 2012-2017



RECOMMENDATIONS

We have quantified the gender gap at 23 conferences in Europe. The results indicate there is plenty of room for improvement. Conference organisers can begin to make a difference by implementing the following changes.

1. Balance the range of topics discussed

Conference hosts must increase the range of issues on their agendas in order to reflect the forces that are reshaping Europe. For example, in 2017 for every panel that debated gender issues, 16 discussed economic issues. However, topics that receive less attention at high-level conferences significantly affect the economy or democracy. For example, conference hosts could devote more time in exploring how gender and discrimination affect the economy. They could put more effort into understanding how the media affects democracy, looking at issues like: the independence of the media, the growth of social media, or the safety of journalists.

2. Target speaker recruitment, per topic

Conference organisers should be aware of the overall composition of their speaker panels. Conference hosts act in a discriminatory way, when they organize conversations in which 80 percent of speaking roles on a topic are given to men. Conference hosts must solve the problem they have created by devoting more time and effort in identifying female experts on male-dominated topics. Conference hosts must provide more opportunities for women to present on: Foreign Policy; the EU; Crime, Terrorism and Security; Economic Situation; Environment, Climate and Energy Issues and Technology. Conference hosts must also encourage the participation of male speakers on the one issue that has been a majority female conversation at high-level conferences: Gender.

3. Identify ascending topics and those that matter to the public

Technology and the EU are ascending topics. These are issues for which conference hosts will need to invest more time and effort to understand both the content and the need to spend more time identifying which speakers have insightful perspectives to share.

High-level conferences have to straddle providing long-term thinking and policy advice, with responding to those issues that the public is concerned about. In recent years, high-level conferences have been asynchronous with public opinion at times. Conference hosts should make a greater effort to explore those topics that matter to citizens. For example, issues of identity and nationalism are increasingly affecting the lives of Europeans. Conference hosts should rely on attitudinal data to make sure their events are addressing the most salient issues of our time.

4. Better monitoring

In order to help conference organisers be aware of the overall composition of their speaker panels. We offer some key questions they could ask themselves.

- a. What has been the share of men and women who have occupied speaking roles at your conferences in recent years?
- b. What topics have your conferences addressed in recent years?
- c. What is the gender breakdown of speakers, per topic?
- d. Are the topics addressed at your conferences also topics (at least in part) that are of direct concern to Europeans?

When the same people talk about the same issues together, they tend to come to the same conclusions over and over. To break this pattern, fresh perspectives are needed on democracy, security, and economics.

Heather Grabbe

Director, the Open Society European Policy Institute

I've helped organise high-level conferences in the past and encountered real difficulties ensuring proper gender balance. We found women but they all declined our invitation. Why? Is it because there are so few women in certain sectors, they get over invited? Is it because they can't afford the time it takes to travel and take days out of their work schedule? Maybe we have to try harder to convince women it's worth their while. Maybe we need to give women more notice so they can make the necessary arrangements to take time out of their normal schedules. Many of the women thought it was a burden, whereas the men jumped at the opportunity. We need to change that.

Monika Queisser

Head of Social Policy, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ANNEX I: 93 DETAILED KEY WORDS

1. 21 Century
2. Afghanistan
3. Africa
4. Asia
5. Autocracy
6. Brexit
7. Caucasus
8. Central and Eastern Europe
9. China
10. Climate
11. Climate Change
12. Climate Change, Energy Security
13. Closing Remarks
14. Corporate Governance
15. Culture
16. Cyber Security
17. Defense
18. Democracy
19. Democratic Governance
20. Democratic Participation
21. Digital Economy
22. Discrimination
23. Disparities
24. Disruptive Technologies
25. Diversity
26. East Asia
27. Economic Growth
28. Economic Integration
29. Economy
30. Education
31. Energy Security
32. Entrepreneurship
33. Environment
34. Ethics
35. Europe
36. EU
37. Extremism
38. Fake News
39. Famine
40. Finances
41. Foreign Affairs
42. Foreign Policy
43. Freedom and Security
44. Fuels
45. Future
46. Gender
47. Global Citizenship
48. Global Economy
49. Global Governance
50. Global Security
51. Globalization
52. Governance
53. Health
54. Human Rights
55. India, Southeast Asia
56. Innovation
57. Intergovernmental Cooperation
58. Introductory Remarks
59. Investigative Journalism
60. Investment
61. Kosovo
62. Latin America
63. Lifestyle
64. Local Governance
65. Media
66. Middle East
67. Migrants
68. Migration
69. NATO
70. North Korea
71. Populism
72. Poverty
73. Power Shifts
74. Regional Security
75. Religion
76. Research
77. Russia
78. Security
79. Social Media
80. Social Policy
81. Southeast Asia
82. Space
83. Speech
84. Technologies
85. Terrorism
86. Transatlantic Relations
87. Turkey
88. United States
89. United Kingdom
90. Ukraine
91. Warfare
92. Web Economy
93. Work

