

FEMINA POLITICA

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Call for Papers

Issue 2/2025

A "Union of Equality"?

Gender Equality and Anti-discrimination Policies of the European Union

The last European elections took place in June 2024. As expected, it ended with a shift to the right. Compared to the result after the 2019 European elections, this starting position is significantly less favourable for gender equality and anti-discrimination policies. The "Union of Equality" proclaimed at the time by the first woman Commission President Ursula von der Leyen included the adoption of five interlinked strategies ("sister strategies") on the topics of gender equality, anti-racism, Sinti/Roma, LGBTQI and disability, which were intended to pursue an intersectional perspective in addition to gender mainstreaming.

Particularly the gender equality and LGBTQI strategies have been underpinned by a whole package of measures and directives. These successes become not only under pressure with the shift to the right, but could be seriously jeopardised, especially regarding the further implementation of European equality and anti-discrimination requirements in the member states. This is because the EP election result also reflects the ongoing shift to the right in many member states that are represented in the Council - the third core institution of the EU.

The objective is to take stock of the period 2019-2024 and develop scenarios for 2024-2029. It also aims to provide (comparative) analyses of the content of the various strategies and their implementation in the member states. How these can be evaluated from an intersectional perspective and what happens during national implementation has so far received little attention in research. Moreover, whether the objectives of gender mainstreaming and intersectionality have been implemented across the board in these and other policies is a black box, not least the question of what understanding guides these approaches in the first place.

Contributions can draw on various theoretical and methodological perspectives. In addition to policy analyses focusing on representation (descriptive, substantive, symbolic), discourse analysis and institutionalist approaches can also be used. Depending on the starting point, the focus can be on both the EP and the Commission as well as their interactions, relations with the Council of the EU, parties, social partners, civil society organisations and social movements, including oppositional forces like anti-gender or anti-LGBTIQ mobilizations.

Considering the current state-of-the-art, the following research questions could be addressed:

- How strongly are women and marginalised groups represented in the EU institutions and what effects does this have on (1) their internal structure/organisation (polity), (2) the

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decision-making processes (politics) and (3) their policies? Which other actors interact with or against the EU institutions? What efforts are emerging among various actors (EU institutions, political parties, civil society) to make polity, politics and policy more inclusive?

- Which equality and anti-discrimination policies have been launched? Have gender and intersectionality references been introduced in individual policy areas by means of one of the five associated strategies and what understanding of gender aspects and intersectionality is evident? How can the Commission's new political priorities regarding equality, anti-discrimination and intersectionality be categorised in feminist terms and are there conceptual differences compared to previous strategies?
- Given the composition of the EP and the Commission after the 2024 elections, what can we expect for various equality policies and issues? What gender equality and anti-discrimination policy positions have the EP political groups taken so far? What changes can we expect now after new political groups have been formed, especially in view of the gains made by conservative and far-right parties? Which political groups and/or national parties characterise the gender equality policies of the EP and the other EU institutions?
- What is the significance of the fact that 2019 was the first time a woman became President of the Commission, another became only the third EP President, and for the first time a Commissioner was explicitly responsible for gender equality? Are there any changes in the internal organisation and policies? Are there any changes in public perception regarding the various crises (e.g. rule of law, pandemic, NextGenerationEU, Brexit, Ukraine war)?
- How can the vision of a "Union of Equality" be assessed, as well as the individual strategies and measures - both in terms of "internal" and external policy strategies (e.g. Gender Action Plan III)? How should the priorities of the Commission be assessed from a gender equality and intersectional perspective?
- What developments can be seen in the implementation of equality and anti-discrimination policy measures and directives in the member states? How do the individual member states position themselves in relation to EU equality policy? Is there a difference between the domestic political positioning towards the EU and the actual position in the various EU bodies such as the Council of the EU?

Proposals for contributions on aspects that are addressed in the Call for Papers but may not be exhaustively dealt with in these questions are also very welcome!

Abstracts and contact

Gabriele Abels and Petra Ahrens are the Special Issue editors for this issue. Abstracts of one to two pages should be sent to to gabriele.abels@uni-tuebingen.de and petra.ahrens@tuni.fi or to the editorial address redaktion@femina-politica.de by **30 November 2024**. Femina Politica considers itself an intersectional feminist journal. It promotes academic work by women and people marginalized based on gender (such as trans*, inter*, non-binary or gender non-conforming people) in and outside academia and invites the submission of abstracts with qualified content.

Deadline for submission of contributions

The Special Issue editors select contributions based on abstract submissions and invite authors to submit full papers until **15 December 2024**. The deadline for manuscripts of 35,000 to maximum 40,000 characters (including spaces, footnotes, and bibliography), prepared for anonymous double blind review, is **15 March 2025**. Information concerning the author(s) should only be provided on the title page. All manuscripts are reviewed by external reviewers (double blind) and by one journal editor. The reviews will be returned by **15 May 2025** at the latest. The final publication decision will be based on the full-length paper. The deadline for the final version is **15 July 2025**.