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# Absent Influencers? Women in European Think Tanks

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## Summary

European think tanks have until recently been somewhat immune from discussions on gender equality. As non-profit organizations, operating independently of governments and political parties, their organizational structure and productivities have seldom been scrutinized as other institutions in the political realm. Yet, think tanks are key influencers of public policy and their research, analysis, and engagement in public debate should reflect the diversity of the societies they are part of impacts the quality and relevance of their work given their role as informers of public opinion.

This paper argues that think tanks need to refocus on their value, mission, and role in order to be impactful in the current competitive and often poisonous political environment in many countries. As long as they do not renew their composition and capacity for innovation by bringing in fresh ideas from a more diversified mix of genders, ages, nationalities, and social, educational, and political backgrounds, they run the risk of being seen as “elitist” and out of touch with society as they do not reflect their diversity.

Reviewing the gender composition of 25 European think tanks reveal that while European think tanks employ men and women nearly equally, their leadership continues to be male-dominated. This is also the case on the research and analysis, or “content,” side of think tanks. At the senior level, the content work of think tanks is male-dominated, though there is greater gender equality at the entry and mid-career levels. On the administrative side of European think tanks, which is less visible to the public, the situation is different. Women make up 66 percent of senior employees and 74 percent of non-senior ones in “organizational” departments such as communica-

tions, finance, human resources, IT, and partnership and fundraising.

While the greater proportion of women in organizational functions has helped improve their number in the executive teams and the overall proportion of women in think tanks, there is increasingly a gendering of careers. While women have risen in the administration of think tanks, they are still poorly represented as senior experts, directors, and presidents of think tanks.

This paper contends that, if they want to continue to play a leading role across their fields of expertise and shape the way forward for Europe and the EU, think tanks must commit to reflecting in their composition the societies they aim to serve. It offers recommendations for changes they can learn from their peers in Europe and the United States to address the inadequate gender status quo in their organizational structures and procedures to ensure they remain relevant and impactful in the 21st century. These changes fall under following categories:

- Create a diversity-and-inclusion committee to advise the leadership and board;
- Addressing discriminatory hiring and human-resources practices;
- Offering paid internships or traineeships to ensure a more diverse pipeline for junior positions;
- Creating an inclusive, flexible work environment;
- Making diversity part of the vision plan and the mission;
- Eliminating all-male panels and authorship;
- Addressing criteria and methods for tasks and promotion; and
- Promoting cooperation on diversity and inclusion.

## Introduction

In 2019, the European Commission appointed its first female head, Ursula von der Leyen, along with 12 female commissioners (out of 27) and a commissioner for equality. Since last year's elections, the European Parliament has 288 female members (41 percent, up from 37 percent in 2014 and 35 percent in 2009.) By comparison, in the United States following the 2018 midterm elections, there are 127 women in Congress, making up 24 percent of the House of Representatives and 25 of the Senate (compared to 19.4 percent in 2017-2019 Congress). These numbers reflect the numerous efforts to increase the number of women in high-level and decision-making positions.

As organizations that play a vital role in political and policy arenas, think tanks have until recently been somewhat immune from discussions on gender equality. As providers of public policy research, analysis, and advice, as well as in their position often as non-profit organizations, operating independently of governments and political parties, their organizational set-up and outputs have seldom been scrutinized as intensely as other institutions in the political realm.

Think tanks are key influencers of public policy and whether their research, analysis, and engagement in public debate reflect the diversity of the societies they are part of impacts the quality and relevance of their work. Their diversity not only influences the extent of innovation of their intellectual products and their advice to policymakers, it also shapes their role as informers of public opinion. Parts of the private sector have already realized that diverse teams create better products that are more attractive to a diverse consumer base.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the degree of diversity in think tanks will shape the scope of their original and forward-looking ideas—a claim so many of them take pride in. While diversity is not limited to gender, this paper examines gender diversity only.

The environment in which think tanks operate has changed too, and in some respects quite dramatically. The role of research, evidence-based argumentation, and fact-driven policy has been severely undermined by the vilification of expertise, and the spread of disinformation, or “alternative facts” (as former adviser to the U.S. president Kellyanne Conway famously put it.) Think tanks too have been late to rise to the challenge of populism and disinformation, suffering from complacency and lack of foresight in predicting the political changes that have been shaping our times, such as the global impact of the financial crisis or the surge of populism.

***Women leaders have been praised for acting early and decisively to control the spread of coronavirus and for connecting public health and international security.***

The experience of the coronavirus pandemic confirms the importance of gender diversity in policymaking. The performance of countries with female heads of government, while still a small category, in dealing with the crisis has so far been positive. Women leaders have been praised for acting early and decisively to control the spread of coronavirus and for connecting public health and international security. They have displayed a compassionate leadership style, acknowledged their anxiety, ordered inclusive solutions that responded to the various voices and needs in society, and communicated clearly.<sup>2</sup> But the crisis not only sees a different appreciation of leadership skills, it has also brought back an appreciation of expertise as

1 Michael Bush & Kim Peters, “[How the Best Companies Do Diversity Right](#),” Fortune, December 5, 2016; Society for Human Resource Management, “[Global Diversity and Inclusion](#),” Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009.

2 Leta Hong Fincher, “[Women leaders are doing a disproportionately great job at handling the pandemic. So why aren't there more of them?](#)”, CNN, April 16, 2020; Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, “[Are Women Better At Managing The Covid19 Pandemic?](#)”, Forbes, April 10, 2020; Emma Graham-Harrison, “[Covid-19: how world leaders responded to the crisis](#)”, The Guardian, April 12, 2020; Isabelle François & Marta Martinelli, “[Leading with compassion: Emerging lessons from Covid19](#)”, WIIS Brussels, April 15, 2020.

politicians and the general public are craving accurate information on everything from health to economics, security, and global affairs. While it remains to be seen how strong a subsequent backlash against this will be, the current situation reinforces the need to focus on the gender performances of think tanks and policy institutions.

To work in the current competitive and often poisonous political environment in many countries, think tanks need to refocus on their value, mission, and role. The accusation that they are “elite” or “establishment” institutions that do not reflect society and its diversity will ring true as long as they do not renew their composition and capacity for innovation by bringing in fresh ideas from a more diversified mix of genders, ages, nationalities, and social, educational, and political backgrounds.<sup>3</sup>

Against this backdrop, it is high time to review the state of play of gender equality within European think tanks. In 2018, Women in International Security (WIIS) in the United States created a gender scorecard to examine the gender balance of think tanks working on foreign affairs and international relations based in and around Washington, DC.<sup>4</sup> This highlighted significant disparity in the number of male and female think tank leaders. In the United States, the Brookings Institution, the Rand Corporation, and the Urban Institute have published their demographic data and committed to actions related to diversity and inclusion.<sup>5</sup> At the German Marshall Fund of the United States, there have been staff proposals to pay greater attention to diversifying the organization’s make-up, beginning with the pool of candidates considered for positions. (See Annex 3.)

European policy circles now address the issue of gender diversity in panels and conferences thanks

to the bottom-up initiatives such as EU Panel Watch and the Brussels Binder.<sup>6</sup> This paper is the first review of the gender composition of European think tanks. The 25 surveyed think tanks were selected using the “Global Go To Think Tank Index 2019”.<sup>7</sup>

### Unbalanced at the Top and in Content

European think tanks employ men and women nearly equally. The gender balance of full-time salaried employees is relatively even, with 55 percent men and 45 percent women. Upon closer inspection, however, this gender balance is superficial. As Figure 1 shows, the leadership of think tanks continues to be male-dominated; all presidents (mostly honorary, representational roles) and three-quarters of directors (executive roles) are men. This is similar to the picture in Washington where women head one-third of the 22 think tanks surveyed by WIIS. In Central and Eastern Europe, the leadership of think tanks is slightly more female than Western Europe with a 5 to 3 ratio. Here Providus and the Lithuanian Free Market Institute are led by women while the Slovak Foreign Policy Association is run jointly by one man and one woman. In Western Europe, the practice of think tanks having a high-profile president performing largely representation roles is quite common. Two of the four think tanks led by women, Istituto Affari Internazionali and DGAP, are formally headed by male presidents.

The composition of governing boards repeats the pattern, with less than one-quarter of members being female. This may in part be explained by the fact that many boards include the former leadership of the think tank as well as former government or political representatives, or former diplomats—that is, former occupants of positions that are often still male-dominated. This is similar to the one in the United States,

3 Rosa Balfour, “What are think tanks for? Policy research in the age of anti-expertise,” LSE IDEAS, December 11, 2017.

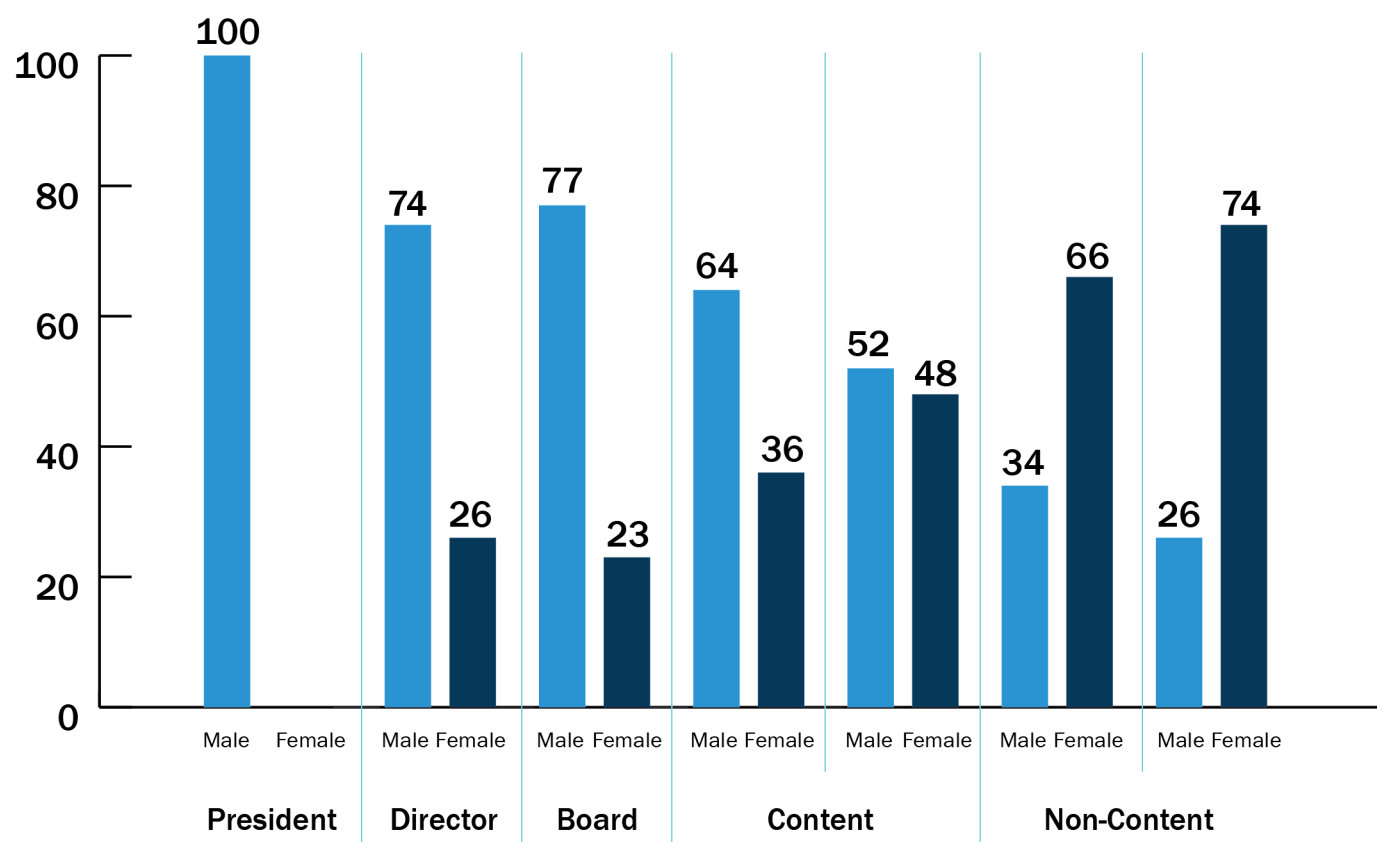
4 WIIS Washington, DC, “WIIS Gender Scorecard: Washington, DC, Think Tanks — 2018,” September 24, 2018.

5 Brookings Institution, “Inclusion and Diversity,” 2019; Rand Corporation, “Diversity and Inclusion at RAND,” 2019; Urban Institute, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Urban,” 2019.

6 The Brussels Binder is a publicly available database of women experts; EU Panel Watch is a campaign that monitored EU events and called out imbalanced panels. It ended its activities in November 2019, but background can be found [here](#)

7 James G. McGann, “2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report,” Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania, January 29, 2019.

Figure 1. Gender Breakdown of Think Tank Roles, %.



where women make up less than one-quarter of board members, according to WIIS.

On the research and analysis, or “content,” side of European think tanks, the gender gap somewhat improves with 64 percent of men holding senior positions—as directors of research programs or senior fellows—versus 36 percent of women. At the non-senior level of content work, 48 percent of experts are women. In other words, the senior level in content work is male-dominated whereas there is greater gender equality at entry and mid-career levels.

This snapshot does not capture the reasons for the gender gap between senior and less senior positions in think tanks. It does suggest that women are not climbing the ladder of think-tank hierarchies, are less frequently promoted to senior levels, and thereby less frequently making it up to the executive and leader-

ship levels. Possible explanations could be that women are not good in negotiating their job titles, leave think tanks to pursue positions elsewhere, remain in mid-level positions due to caring responsibilities at home—a structural problems in the job market in general—or there are simply no upward mobility opportunities and higher positions are already filled by men.

The numbers tell a different story when it comes to the administration of European think tanks. In those surveyed, women make up 66 percent of senior employees and 74 percent of non-senior ones in “organizational” departments such as communications, finance, human resources, IT, and partnership and fundraising. In the Central and Eastern European ones surveyed, 100 percent of senior non-content staff are women. These departments are, however, less visible

in the public recognition of a think tank and at times tend to be less valued.

This survey distinguishes between the heads of think tanks and representative roles—the director and president, depending on the institution—and the executive or management teams. Executive teams often include senior non-content staff, such as heads of finance or partnership and fundraising. As result of women’s greater representation in such positions, the gender balance in executive teams is far more even than that the category of directors/presidents, with 56 percent of men to 44 percent of women. (See Figure 2.)

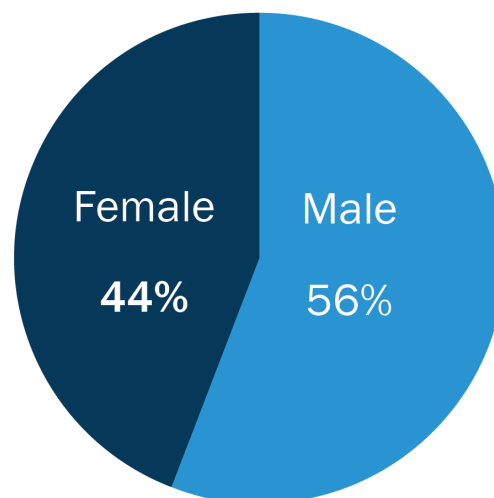
While there are differences among think tanks and a few exceptions, the data presents a roughly similar picture across them. The imbalance between men and women is consistent and common. Even in the few cases where a think tank is led by a woman, the governing boards and leadership remains dominated by men. It is the same for senior content positions. The only areas where women are more present are in non-content departments. The aggregate numbers hide exceptions or good examples, such as an equal male-female board or senior content staff.

### Gendered Roles

The greater proportion of women in organizational functions has helped improve their number in the executive teams and the overall proportion of women in think tanks. The flip side to this progress, however, is an increased gendering of careers: while women have risen in the administration of think tanks, they are still poorly represented as senior experts, directors, and presidents of think tanks. This chimes with other studies. One study found that between 2012 and 2017 the only panels at European high-level conference in which women speakers outnumbered men were those on gender, where 78 percent of speakers were women.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, men accounted for 82 percent of speakers on foreign policy, 80 percent on the EU, 79 percent on security, and 78 percent on economics.

8 Open Society Foundation, “[An End to Manels II: Closing the Gender Gap at Europe’s Top Policy Events](#),” 2018.

Figure 2. Gender Composition of Think Tank Executive Teams



The same study found that in 2017 just 29 percent of speakers at these conferences were women. According to another study, at 150 events monitored in Brussels in November 2018, 28.4 percent of speakers were women with think tanks performing more poorly than the EU institutions, NGOs, and businesses in hosting gender-equal panels. Twenty-six percent of panels were all-male panels.<sup>9</sup> Naming-and-shaming initiatives have started to urge conference organizers to design more diverse panels, but “manels” are still a frequent occurrence.

This situation is reflected elsewhere. Academic journals publish fewer articles by women and the topics are strongly gendered. For example, according to one study, women are more likely than men to write about gender, race, and discrimination, and journals are less likely to publish articles on such topics.<sup>10</sup> In light of this, it would be expected that a think tank specializing in a traditionally male-dominated policy

9 EU Panel Watch, “[How thick is the glass ceiling?](#),” Medium, November 5, 2019.

10 Ellen M. Rey & Jane Lawrence Summer, “[You Research Like a Girl: Gendered Research Agendas and Their Implications](#),” American Political Science Association, October 2019.

fields such as security and economics would employ far more men. Indeed, the think tanks surveyed here that specialize in economics or security have fewer women. For example, the Adam Smith Institute and the International Institute for Strategic Studies in the United Kingdom have very low numbers of women. Bruegel, one of the top European think tanks focusing on economics, has made huge efforts to address its gender imbalance and now has a female deputy director and women in several senior positions. Yet, its experience suggests that, while younger generations of female economists are emerging, senior ones are few (and in high demand).

***The data gathered for this study of women in think tanks in Europe paint a similar picture as the findings of studies in related political spheres when it comes to gender disparity.***

Most European think tanks surveyed here are generalist ones, focusing on European and international affairs. Therefore, their research topics are varied, and not just those where men have been dominant. But the gender gaps at senior levels and within the community of expertise are significant.

Analysis of social media also reveals gender biases. One study found that “with few exceptions, female think-tank experts have less influence in Twitter than their male counterparts,” which was explained by lower numbers of women holding executive or leadership roles.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, there is mounting evidence that experts and journalists who are female or otherwise identifiable as a minority are targeted more with hateful content and greater vitriol on social media,

possibly discouraging women from being active on these platforms.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Absence of Women**

The data gathered for this study of women in think tanks in Europe paint a similar picture as the findings of studies in related political spheres when it comes to gender disparity. The trend for women to occupy only around one-third of positions at the highest level of think tanks comes as no surprise; they reflect statistics about gender parity in political positions across the EU, where women make up 28 percent of ministers, 29 percent of members of national parliaments, and 28.5 percent of members of regional assemblies.<sup>13</sup>

The overall proportion of women in ministerial positions or national parliaments in the EU—just under one-third—also hides substantial differences among the member states, with Sweden and Denmark topping virtually all rankings with respect to gender equality and Greece and Hungary consistently ranking at the bottom. In the Scandinavian countries, a decade of positive-discrimination policies, such as quotas, gender-conscious hiring and nomination practices, have helped increase the number of women in governments. This has happened even more systematically in the private sector. For instance, in 2019 women made up 25 percent of the boards of the largest European quoted companies quoted on the stock market, supervisory boards, or boards of directors but that figure was 38 percent in countries that introduced quotas.<sup>14</sup> The 2014–19 European Commission prioritized increasing the number of women in management positions, even if it meant at times freezing appointments when candidate pools were not gender-balanced.<sup>15</sup>

11 Cristina Manzano & Juan A. Sánchez-Giménez, “[Women, gender and think tanks: political influence network in Twitter 2018](#),” Real Instituto Elcano, April 2, 2019.

12 Becky Gardiner, Mahana Mansfield, Ian Anderson, Josh Holder, Daan Louter & Monica Ulmanu, “The dark side of Guardian comments,” The Guardian, April 12, 2016.

13 European Institute for Gender Equality, “[Gender equality index](#),” Power in the European Union, 2019.

14 Ibid.

15 European Commission, “[Women in management: Juncker Commission exceeds its 40 percent target](#),” October 22, 2019.

## Conclusion

Think tanks like to convey an image of creativity, excellence, foresight capacity, and being drivers of policy solutions by deepening understanding and multidisciplinary approaches, to use some commonly used self-descriptions. They pride themselves on a rich and diversified network of contacts, often across the globe. Indeed, these are among the strengths of think tanks, but at the same time they remain hierarchically organized with few positions at the top that are overwhelmingly occupied by men. This gender imbalance reflects the one in politics, government, and in many corporate boards. For think tanks to produce innovative thinking, the first step is to correct their internal composition to reflect a greater diversity of perspectives.

The changing public debate on gender equality has ensured that think tanks and their leaderships are finally aware of their shortcomings. The 25 European think tanks surveyed claim to be committed to identifying ways to rectify their gender imbalances. This is welcome not simply for the sake of gender diversity. The core role of think tanks—providing expertise and evidence-based analysis—is increasingly under attack from disinformation and populists and their supporters, as they are seen among those institutions that are perceived as “elite” and thus having also lost the trust of the public. Greater diversity within think tanks is a first step toward increasing their capacity to be empathetic to developments in society and provide more nuanced analysis across the board.

If think tanks want to continue to play a leading role across their fields of expertise and shape the way forward for Europe and the EU, they must commit to reflecting in their composition the societies they aim to serve. What can be done to break up structures that reinforce benevolent, paternalistic, or self-centered men from dominating how politics are practiced and policies written? With a vibrant civil society in Europe demanding alternatives to stop climate change, counter government corruption, and uphold the rule of law, the time is ripe for action on diversity.

In this regard, European think tanks must consider also whether they want to take a top-down approach—for instance, by following the examples of the European Commission and some private-sector actors in diversifying their personnel and work outputs—or follow the bottom-up dynamics challenging the status quo and structures upholding outdated practices. Introducing change in think tanks, which are often relatively small organizations, financially challenged, and highly dependent on established personnel and personalities, can be arduous, but there are several practices that can be adopted to start positive change processes—some of which have been implemented by a few think tanks with promising results so far.

## Recommendations for Organizational Changes

Below are recommendations that European think tanks can learn from their peers in Europe and the United States to take a step toward changing the inadequate gender status quo in their organizational structures and procedures. These small, practical steps to adapt structures will help ensure they remain relevant and impactful in the 21st century. As European Commission President von der Leyen calls for consultation processes around the future of Europe, it is an opportune time for think tanks to ensure that the debates, analyses, and recommendations they generate and contribute to also include women.

### *Create a diversity-and-inclusion committee to advise the leadership and board*

Rather than assigning a diversity officer, think tanks should create a diversity and inclusion committee that includes men and women, younger and older, as well as staff from different programs/departments of the organization and hierarchical levels to advise the leadership on best practices—for example, on mainstreaming gender perspectives, developing guidelines for external engagement, evaluating employment practices, and improving communications.



### *Address discriminatory hiring and human-resources practices*

Think tanks should review their hiring practices and introduce gender-neutral mechanisms such as inclusive language in job ads and advertising positions across diverse and non-traditional outlets. They should adopt blind application procedures and flexible requirements to ensure that markers of diversity such as gender but also different mother tongue, disability, alternative educational history are considered in all human-resources procedures. Further, they need to ensure that hiring decisions and promotions are made by a diverse group. They should also introduce diversity as a benchmark in performance reviews.

### *Offer paid internships or traineeships to ensure a more diverse pipeline for junior positions*

In order to ensure that a broader segment of the population can enter the world of policy analysis and have their experiences and backgrounds feed into their work, think tanks should offer financial compensation for interns and trainees to build a socioeconomically diverse pipeline for future employees, which also enables women from working-class or ethnically diverse backgrounds to enter this field. Think tanks could, for example, benefit from schemes like the EU-funded Erasmus+ traineeship that enables recent graduates to gain early employment experience. In the United States, for example, in order to attract more diverse applicant pools, the Brookings Institution has cultivated relationships with diverse universities, fellowship programs, and associations, including those serving populations traditionally underrepresented in the policy workforce.

### *Create an inclusive, flexible work environment*

Think tanks need to address the various problems that keep women out of, from returning to, or from advancing in the workplace, including maternity leave and additional caring burdens. This could include job sharing, work-from-home flexibility, on-site child-care solutions, eliminating evening meetings and events, and instituting gender-neutral policies (for

example, on parental leave). Mentoring relationships throughout the organization can increase advocacy and publishing opportunities for junior staff or those in lower-ranking positions.

### *Make diversity part of the vision plan and the mission*

Think tanks should commit to enhancing their institutional understanding, capacity, and focus with respect to reflecting a gender perspective in their research, analysis, policy recommendations, and public engagement. This means that staff recognize gender as a vital, basic dynamic to be considered in policymaking and the institution acknowledges that women as well as men should play their full role in all aspects of politics and policymaking. The International Crisis Group, with offices in Washington and Brussels developed a gender mainstreaming strategy in 2016 to ensure inclusive and non-discriminatory approaches to its work. In the United States, the Urban Institute has adjusted its human-resources approach to ensure its staff reflect a range of competencies it needs. This includes conducting diversity training on gender, race, ethnicity, and other characteristics for all staff, focusing on topics such as unconscious bias to heighten awareness of diversity issues and develop soft skills. European institutions could learn from these experiences to pay more attention also in the long run to regional and ethnic diversity, which often can include gender dynamics.

### *Eliminate all-male panels and authorship*

Think tanks should commit to eliminating all-male panels and improving the gender diversity of invited speakers to events. They can rely on tools such as the Brussels Binder or other databases (which are currently being consolidated and collected as part of the Brussels Binder Beyond initiative). With media outlets increasingly also paying attention to not only quoting male experts or referencing policy analysis written only by men, this will hopefully also lead to think tanks to think more strategically about building more gender-diverse research and policy analysis

teams and thereby lead to publications from more diverse authors.

### *Address criteria and methods for tasks and promotion*

The statistics presented here hint at the possibility that women, while they are represented in equal numbers to men at the non-senior level of content work, are not enjoying professional development that leads them to senior positions. Think tanks need to investigate the reasons for this imbalance and identify ways to counter it. The culprits often pointed to are work-life balance as well as the travel and other demands that think-tank life require. Yet other demanding sectors—such as politics, the civil service, or private sector enterprises—have been able to design policies to support parenting and a better balance between professional and personal life. Think tanks, which often have smaller and more informal structures, can accommodate the diverse needs of its staff.

Targeted trainings to counter possible bias against female expertise and to boost women's prospects to move into senior positions should be used. This could also include ensuring pay equity through transparency and developing methods such as performance reviews to track improvements.

In Europe, the “revolving door” culture, whereby think tankers move in and out of government administration to directly support policymaking as advisers, is far less established and widespread than in the United States. This entrenches low turnover in senior think tank positions and fewer opportunities for women to move up the hierarchy. Often, when senior think tankers in management positions do move, the expectation is to retain the titles earned. Directors

and presidents tend to be reluctant to relinquish their titles when they step down from management roles or move to different positions in other organizations. One way to increase the number of women in leadership positions would be to think more fluidly about the roles senior experts can play within a think tank. Once a director does not mean always a director: time off to write a book can help a senior women expert gain experience in senior management and enable her to move more easily on and up. Think tankers are professional multi-taskers as well as experts; a rotation of responsibilities would help women and men think differently about their tasks and offer prospects of professional growth.

### *Promote cooperation on diversity and inclusion*

Think tanks and policy institutions should share with one another best practices and approaches that have produced measurable results. Because think tanks tend to be relatively small organizations, introducing change in staff composition and internal processes may be hard in the short term. Sharing experiences and increasing peer pressure can help think tanks persevere in their goals and make positive change processes sustainable over time.

In Europe, it is difficult to speak of a uniform think tank sector. Differences among institutions in terms of size, funding mechanisms, and programs, as well as diverse methods when it comes to structures and titles, make generalization tricky. Financial hardship can put constraints on change and adaptation—which can be further impaired by the lack of people rotating in and out of positions. Yet, their common purpose of providing expertise to policymakers, the media, and the general public puts a certain responsibility on them to adjust.

## Annex 1. Methodology

This paper examines the gender balance in 25 think tanks based the European Union (15 in Western Europe and 10 in Central Europe). It shows the proportion of men and women employed by these as well as the functions and positions held by each group. The data differentiates between “content” (full time, salaried researchers) and “non-content” positions (administration, finance, IT, communications, logistics, development, and human resources). The data also differentiates between the leadership position of a think tank (usually the director), the representative role (usually the president), the executive or management team, and the board. The data also distinguishes between senior (deputy directors, program directors, senior researchers) and non-senior (mid-career and lower-level staff) positions.

The cases were drawn from the Global Go To Think Tank Index 2019, published by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program of the University of Pennsylvania’s Lauder Institute. This source was chosen despite some limitations, which required adaptation. To focus on EU member states, we chose the first 15 in the Western European ranking and the first 10 from EU member states in the Global Go To Think Tank Index for Central and Eastern Europe. To focus on independent think tanks, partisan organizations, such as political party foundations and advocacy NGOs, were not considered.

The other point of departure was the WIIS Gender Scorecard: Washington, DC, Think Tanks—2018. This looked at gender equality in foreign and security policy think tanks but, given that in Europe most think tanks have a wider policy approach, the selection here was not limited to ones working on international politics. Unlike the WIIS study, this one also includes all think tank staff and not just expert or research staff. “Organizational” staff are included as many think-tank activities revolve around convening and other mixed activities in which organizational staff play

a fundamental role. Even if these employees are not producing expert analysis, the design and communication of these activities contributes indirectly to the policy-shaping role of think tanks. In addition, like all organizations, think tanks can only function with organizational staff, often working in the shadow of those visible in the policy debate.

### Challenges

Data collection posed some challenges. First, structures and job titles vary across think tanks. This made it sometimes difficult to determine whether a person’s job included research and content work or was of an administrative and organizational nature, as well as to compare seniority levels and identify who is part of an executive team. The hierarchy inside think tanks is not always transparent; the head of an institution may not be clearly identifiable if honorary titles are used, and at times the real leading force is second in the hierarchy. Similarly, some think tanks may have no governing board, while others have two, such as an advisory board, and a general board.

The flexible structure allowing think tanks to employ experts and advisers as well as associate fellows for specific areas of research posed a problem for the research. Who qualifies as an employee of the think tank? Here the data is limited to employees whose salary is provided by the think tank, excluding external associate or non-resident fellows, trainees, students, military fellows, consultants, doctoral candidates, and advisers. Especially for smaller think tanks, however, this can mean that staff is exclusively or overwhelmingly organizational, with expertise brought in for specific projects.

The data was collected by public information found on organizations’ websites (staff, board composition), and follow-up contact with individual think tanks. A last update was made in March 2020.

## Annex 2. Gender Composition of 25 European Think Tanks

						Content				Non-Content			
President		Director		Board		Senior		Other		Senior		Other	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Belgium—Bruegel (28 Male, 20 Female; 58%-42%)													
0	0	1	0	6	5	8	3	7	4	1	3	5	5
Belgium—Centre for European Policy Studies (38 Male, 37 Female; 51%-49%)													
1	0	1	0	10	4	8	2	12	18	5	2	1	11
Bulgaria—Center for Liberal Strategies (7 Male, 8 Female; 47%-53%)													
0	0	0	0	4	1	3	4	0	1	0	0	0	2
Czech Republic—EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy (5 Male, 8 Female; 38%-62%)													
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	0	0	1	1
Czech Republic—Institute of International Relations Prague (29 Male, 12 Female; 71%-29%)													
0	0	1	0	8	3	19	6	0	0	0	0	1	3
Czech Republic—Prague Security Studies Institute (18 Male, 11 Female; 62%-38%)													
0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	11	6	0	0	3	3
Denmark—Danish Institute for International Studies (36 Male, 36 Female; 50%-50%)													
0	0	1	0	7	4	19	11	4	7	2	3	3	11
Estonia—Praxis (9 Male, 22 Female; 29%-71%)													
0	0	0	0	4	2	1	4	3	11	0	4	1	1
France—French Institute of International Relations (46 Male, 33 Female; 58%-42%)													
1	0	2	0	23	13	8	6	11	3	1	2	0	9
Germany—Ecologic Institute: Science and Policy for a Sustainable World (39 Male, 59 Female; 40%-60%)													
1	0	0	1	6	3	10	12	11	20	4	6	7	17
Germany—German Council on Foreign Relations (26 Male, 29 Female; 47%-53%)													
2	0	0	1	8	3	10	6	4	9	2	3	0	7
Hungary—Center for Security and Defense Studies (10 Male, 2 Female; 83%-17%)													
0	0	0	1	8	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Italy—Istituto Affari Internazionali (51 Male, 47 Female; 52%-48%)</b>													
3	0	0	1	25	12	10	7	6	12	2	2	5	13
<b>Italy—Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (85 Male, 40 Female; 68%-32%)</b>													
4	0	1	0	57	7	10	4	10	6	3	15	0	8
<b>Latvia—Providus (2 Male, 4 Female; 33%-67%)</b>													
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Lithuania—Lithuanian Free Market Institute (12 Male, 11 Female; 52%-48%)</b>													
0	0	0	1	10	2	0	1	2	3	0	2	0	2
<b>Netherlands—Clingendael (33 Male, 36 Female; 48%-52%)</b>													
0	0	1	0	5	2	9	8	14	19	0	1	4	6
<b>Poland—Polish Institute of International Affairs (18 Male, 11 Female; 62%-38%)</b>													
0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	11	6	0	0	3	3
<b>Slovakia—Slovak Foreign Policy Association (20 Male, 4 Female; 83%-17%)</b>													
0	0	1	1	11	1	0	0	8	1	0	1	0	0
<b>Spain—Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (33 Male, 23 Female; 59%-41%)</b>													
1	0	1	0	16	3	3	4	6	4	2	2	4	10
<b>Spain—Elcano Royal Institute (64 Male, 32 Female; 67%-33%)</b>													
2	0	2	0	30	8	23	11	4	4	2	5	1	4
<b>United Kingdom—Adam Smith Institute (26 Male, 3 Female; 90%-10%)</b>													
0	0	1	0	0	0	18	0	6	2	1	1	0	0
<b>United Kingdom—Chatham House (61 Male, 105 Female; 37%-63%)</b>													
0	0	1	0	9	7	19	15	8	10	14	22	10	51
<b>United Kingdom—International Institute for Strategic Studies (70 Male, 38 Female; 65%-35%)</b>													
0	0	1	0	22	4	18	4	13	7	4	8	12	15
<b>United Kingdom—LSE IDEAS (20 Male, 18 Female; 53%-47%)</b>													
0	0	2	0	5	2	5	2	6	7	1	1	1	6

## Annex 3. GMF Gender Composition

GMF Gender Composition															
President		Executive Team		Board		Content				Non-Content				Total	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
						Senior		Other		Senior		Other			
0	1	4	2	12	7	14	17	25	43	4	4	15	17	74	91
1		6		19		31		68		8		32		165	
	100%	67%	33%	63%	37%	45%	55%	37%	63%	50%	50%	47%	53%	45%	55%

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is not included in the study due to its transatlantic presence with headquarters in the United States and seven offices in Europe, which makes it difficult to compare it with other European think tanks. However, GMF recently compiled its demographic data and can therefore also serve as an example. As of February, it had 145 staff members and 19 (voting) board members.

GMF has a relatively balanced gender composition, though it has more women in non-senior positions. As in other think tanks studied, women at GMF in senior positions often have organizational tasks, such

as HR or partnerships, or people management tasks, arguably crucial functions in an organization that is, nevertheless, primarily recognized for its intellectual output.

After an initial informal working group looked at unconscious biases and provided some reflections, a formal working group developed a survey within the organization to gather and analyze demographic data. This was then presented with recommendations to the executive team, which resulted in a recent statement by GMF's president on diversity and inclusion," in December 2019<sup>1</sup> and the formation of a diversity and inclusion committee.

<sup>1</sup> ["Statement from President Karen Donfried on Diversity and Inclusion at GMF"](#) December 12, 2019.

The views expressed in GMF publications and commentary are the views of the author(s) alone.

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**About GMF**

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working in the transatlantic sphere, by convening leaders and members of the policy and business communities, by contributing research and analysis on transatlantic topics, and by providing exchange opportunities to foster renewed commitment to the transatlantic relationship. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has offices in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, and Warsaw. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.



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