

Furthering Gender Equality in a Wider European Union – A Threefold Challenge for Research

Dr Elena Danescu

University of Luxembourg/ C²DH

Jean Monnet Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre
for Advanced Studies, EUI Florence

Florence School for Transnational Governance
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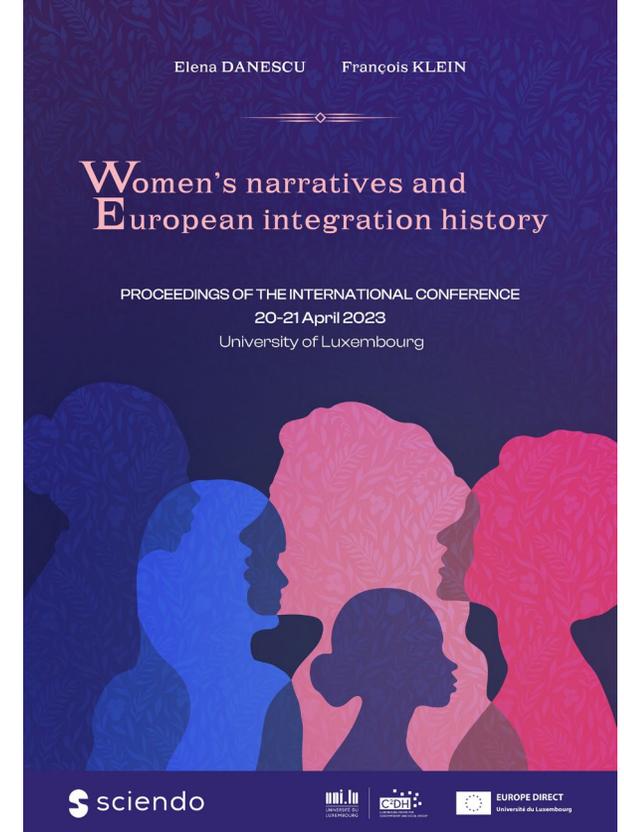
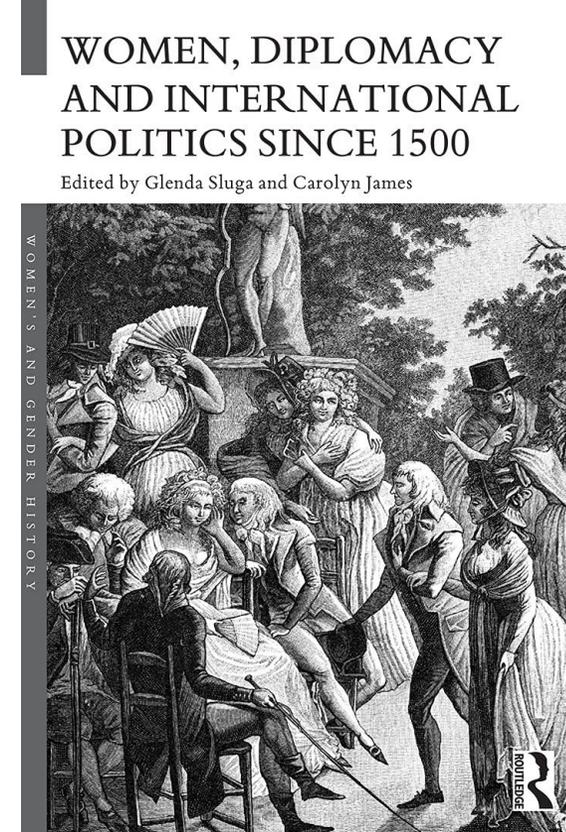
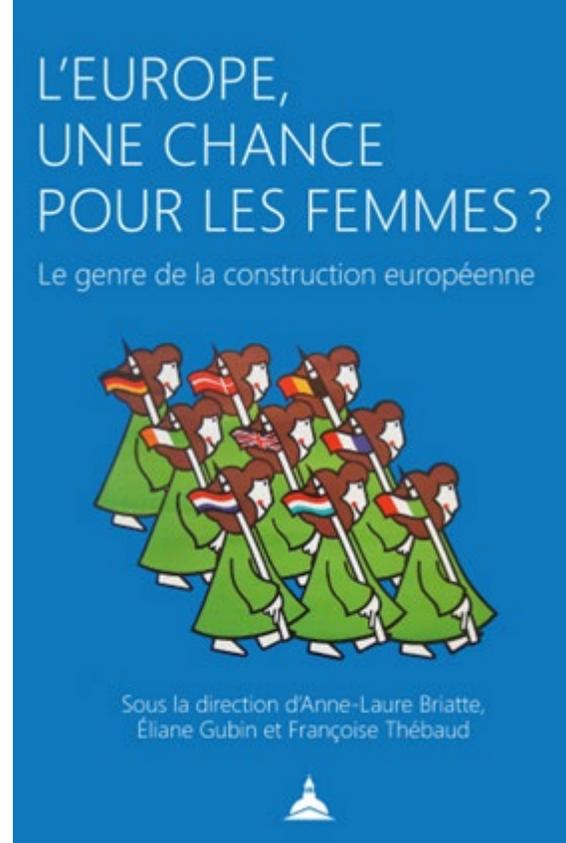
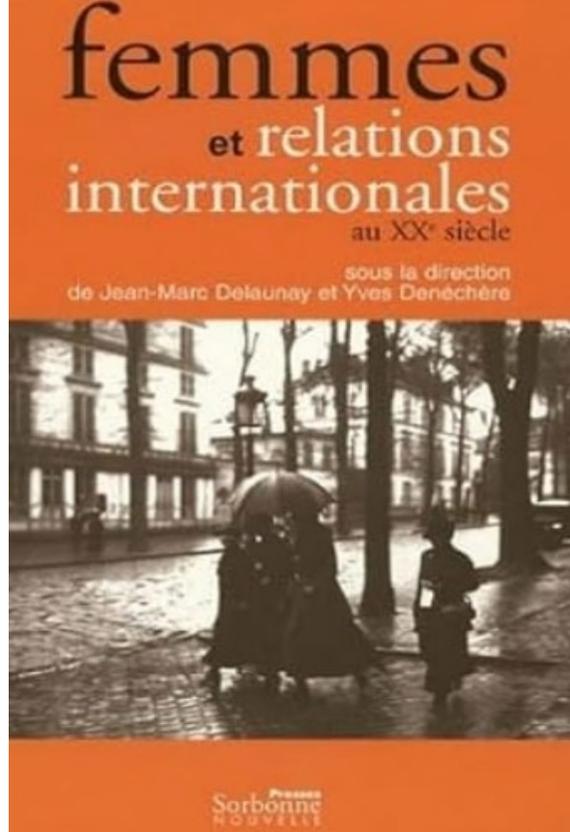
Furthering Gender Equality in a Wider European Union – A Threefold Challenge for Research

1. Interdisciplinarity
2. Emergence of new policies
3. Creating and disseminating new knowledge and sources

1. Interdisciplinarity

The role of women in international relations has been the focus of increasing interest since the mid-1970s, including a wide range of subjects:

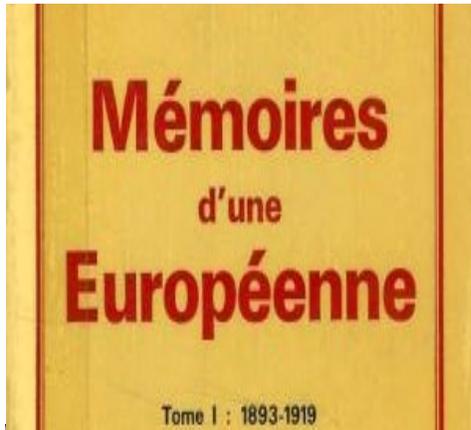
- from pacifism during the Second World War (Gottlieb & Johnson, 2022) to the feminist movement,
- from human rights (Briatte, 2020) to gender studies and intersectionality (Carver & Lyddon, 2022).
- the first European common policy on women's economic and social rights (in the 1970s).
- parity issues (Bereni & Reveillard, 2007; Deshormes, 1991)
- women's participation in the exercise of political power (Woodward, 2004; *Union interparlementaire*, 1995)
- the concept of gender mainstreaming (Abels & Mushaben, 2012)
- the role of women in European integration (Danescu & Klein, 2025 (forthcoming); Hertner, 2021; Briatte, Gubin & Thébaud, 2019).



1. Interdisciplinarity

Women from all horizons played a crucial role in the post-war European project, including democratic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe and EU Eastern enlargement. However, their impact remained under-explored (Sluga 2021; Abels, MacRae 2021), even if recent shifts in historical practice have led to a reinsertion of women in a wide-range of disciplines (Müller, Tömmel 2022; Owens, Rietzler 2021; Sluga 2021; Holzhauser 2021).

1. Interdisciplinarity



- Women have been committed to Europe from the outset of the European project.
- The narrative started with the era of “founding fathers”.
- From the 1950s to the 1970s, women worked in the shadow of European male institutions.
- From the late 1970s onwards, in the EC emerged a policy of gender equality.



2. Emergence of new policies

1957: The Treaty of Rome sets a first milestone for equal pay for male and female workers (art. 119)

1976: Directive on the implementation of equal treatment (including access to employment, training, professional promotion, working conditions)

1978: Directive on the organization of national social security schemes

1979: The election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage marked the start of better representation for women (which number rose from 6% to 16% of the EP)

1995: Gender mainstreaming becomes an integral part of all European Union policies, and the scope of action expands

1997: DAPHNE Program combating violence against women

1997: The Treaty of Amsterdam formalizes gender equality as one of the fundamental principles of Community law

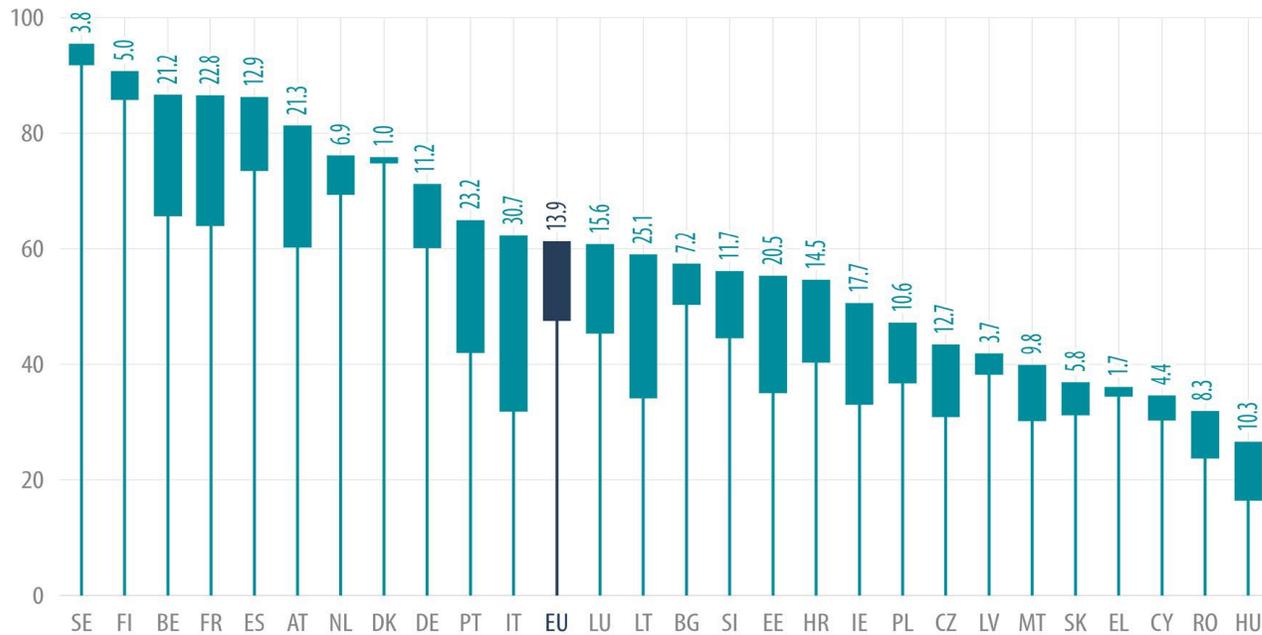
2000 : The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union provides a new basis for women's rights in the EU

2007: European Year of Equal Opportunities for All

2009: The Lisbon Treaty reduced gender discrimination to one of a number of categories, alongside discrimination based on "racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation" (art. 10)

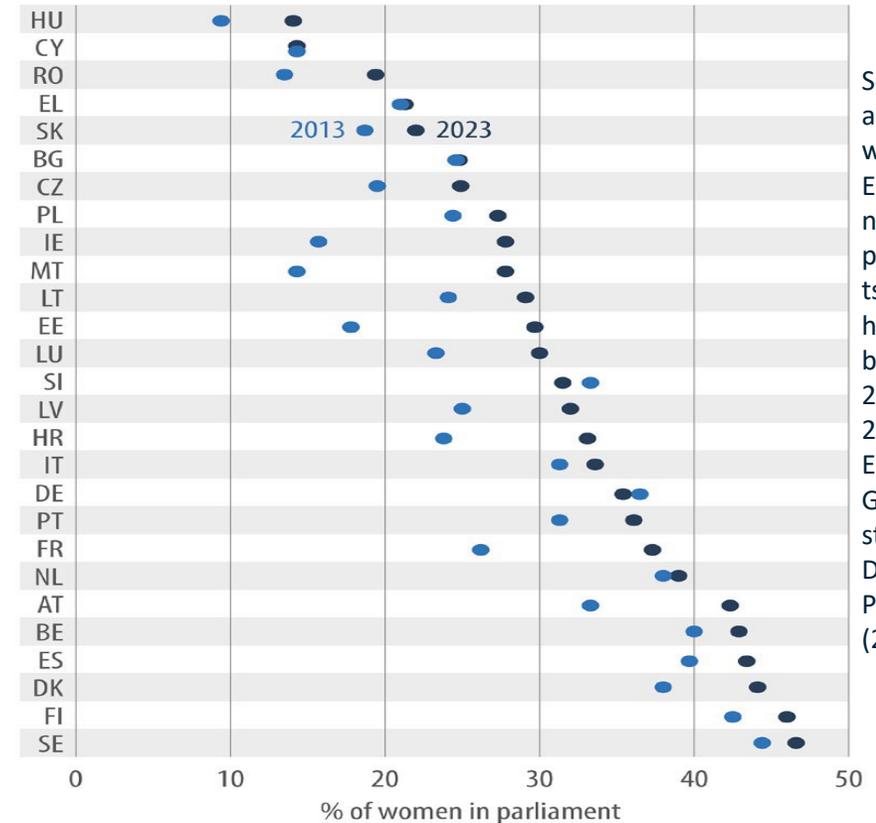
A 2020-2025 EU strategy for gender equality

2. Emergence of new policies



Note: The subdomain of political power looks at the representation of women and men in national parliaments (member of the parliaments (both houses), government (senior and junior ministers) and regional/local assemblies).

Source: EIGE. Gender Equality Index: Political Power 2013-2023
<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/compare-countries/power/1/bar>

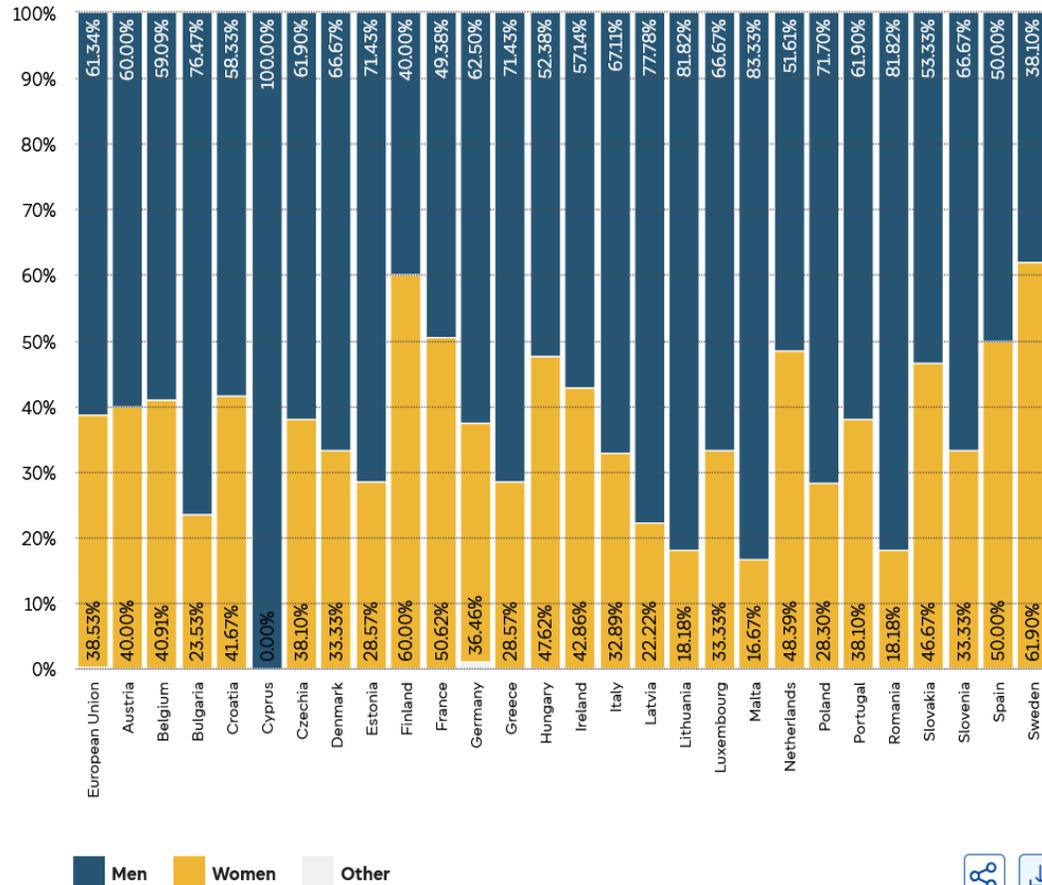


Source: Share of women in EU-27 national parliaments (both houses) between 2013 and 2023. EIGE, Gender statistics Database: Power. (2022)

2. Emergence of new policies

MEPs' gender balance by country - 2024

Constitutive session



➤ The fifth & sixth EU enlargement was the result of the convergence of two simultaneous objectives: the democratic post-communist transitions in the Central and Eastern European countries and their Euro-Atlantic integration process (“gender equality imperatives” impacted by local features)



3. Creating and disseminating new knowledge and sources



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For researchers the time has now come:

- to adopt an interdisciplinary approach awhile integrating the experiences of the new Member States in shaping EU-instigated gender norms
- to stimulate advancement of the research agenda on the role of women in European cooperation through the creation of new sources, including Oral History sources (collections of audiovisual accounts from key players in the field)
- to explore the memories of the women in European integration coming from the Central and Eastern Members States
- to built new approaches to gendering European integration history in the digital era.

This is the ambition of the **Oral History Research Projects, le by Dr Elena Danescu (PI)**:

- **“The female face of Europe – hidden histories, transnational dynamics, new approaches”**, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI Florence (2024-2025)
- **“The role of women in European and international relations of Luxembourg”**, University of Luxembourg/ C²DH (2022-2025)

Sources and © mentions

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