



Strategic framework

2025 - 2027





Who we are

The Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe is a philanthropic initiative. It is the first and only collaborative fund dedicated to supporting progress toward gender equality in Europe.

We bring together seven specialised and generalist funders with a shared vision of a gender-equal Europe. Through an open and collaborative approach, members pool financial resources, knowledge, and networks to amplify their collective funding reach, foster deep learning, and maximise impact.

Our members include the Bodossaki Foundation, Fondation CHANEL, Fondation de France, Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici, JPMorgan Chase, King Baudouin Foundation, and the L'Oréal Fund for Women. The Alliance is hosted by the Network of European Foundations.

The story of the Alliance

As movements like #MeToo brought global attention to women's rights, it became clear that more needed to be done to turn visibility into lasting change. In 2019, Fondation CHANEL launched a consultation with civil society, activists, women's funds, and experts to better understand what was needed. The results revealed a bleak reality: grassroots, women-led organisations were doing vital work but were chronically underfunded and overstretched.

With these insights, an idea began to take shape: the creation of the Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe. This mission gained urgency in early 2020 with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated existing inequalities and disproportionately impacted women and marginalised groups.

In 2021, two foundations - the L'Oréal Fund for Women and the King Baudouin Foundation - joined Fondation CHANEL to officially launch the Alliance with its first COVID Solidarity Fund, supporting gender equality organisations on the frontlines of the crisis.

Momentum grew quickly. The Bodossaki Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, Fondation de France, and Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici joined the collaborative in the following two years, helping to launch an Economic Opportunities Fund to further expand the Alliance's impact.



Impact so far

In the first three years, the Alliance increased its budget five-fold and more than doubled in size. As a result, it has already distributed over 4 million euros to 38 organisations across 18 countries, directly enhancing opportunities and rights for more than 60,000 marginalised women, trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals.

The impact of the Alliance is also in the lives transformed by the work of our grantee partners:

- In Spain and the UK, new funds established by our grantees have **economically empowered** over 100 low-income women entrepreneurs.
- In Hungary, our frontline partner has **expanded services for survivors** of violence by 15%, providing critical support to women in need.
- In Romania, advocacy by our local grantee helped secure the **signing of the ILO treaty** on the prevention of workplace harassment and violence, benefitting all women workers.
- In Croatia, strategic litigation led by our dedicated grantee resulted in **new adoption rights** for same-sex couples.
- With our support, care workers in the **Czech Republic** secured agreements with major employers, leading to **pay raises for thousands** of mostly women employees.

4 million euros —
to 38
ORGANISATIONS
ACROSS 18
countries

The challenge

Slow progress toward gender equality

Gender inequality is holding us back. More must be done to make societies inclusive, just, and fair.

In Europe, gender equality is moving at a snail's pace. No country in the European Union or the United Kingdom has achieved full gender equality.

Last year's gender equality index score for the EU of 71 out of 100 confirms this, and despite significant differences between countries, only 2.3 % of Europeans live in a society approaching gender equality. Progress is possible but it requires a well-resourced, intersectional, and impactful gender equality movement to drive lasting change.

Inequalities in education and work

All Europeans deserve to live and work in an inclusive economy. While progress has been made, the persistent gaps in income, wealth, and time show there's much more work to be done to improve economic opportunities and advance equality.

Across the EU, girls outperform boys in school, except in mathematics, and over the past decade, more women have obtained a university degree than men. However, only 16% of Roma women have completed post-secondary or tertiary education compared to 22% of Roma men. Additionally, gender stereotypes continue to shape educational and career choices, steering men and women into traditionally gendered fields. Fields such as science, tech, and engineering have especially poor track records of including women.

While more women work today than in previous decades, their employment rate (69%) still lags behind men's (80%). Migrant women face the highest rates of unemployment, and women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership roles across economic, political, and social spheres.

Women are not equally valued for their work either, earning on average 13% less per hour than men. This wage gap accumulates into a lifelong earnings gap of 37% when factoring in part-time work, career breaks, and bonuses. These inequities affect retirement savings and benefits, leaving women with pensions that are, on average, 29% lower than men's across the EU. To address these issues, EU institutions have introduced measures to promote pay transparency and prevent discrimination.

Women are also overrepresented in lower-paying sectors, such as healthcare, education, and retail. Women of colour face multiple injustices, often concentrated in jobs with a higher risk of exploitation and abuse. Another challenge is the so-called 'brain waste' of migrants. Since Russia's invasion, over six million people from Ukraine – two-thirds of them are women and girls – have fled to Europe. Yet, by late 2023, only 20% have found jobs in Germany due to delays in the recognition of their qualifications.

Workplace harassment and discrimination are widespread issues. One in three women, both employed and self-employed, report experiencing sexual harassment from a colleague, boss, client, or customer. The psychological, physical, and financial toll is incalculable.

While sexual orientation is protected under EU anti-discrimination law, 9% of LGBTI people surveyed have encountered bias while job hunting and 18% have faced discrimination at work over the past year, particularly in Cyprus, Bulgaria, Greece, and Slovakia. The rates are even higher for trans and non-binary people.

Women still bear the majority of caregiving and household responsibilities. Unpaid caregiving work often results in a significant number of women working part-time or taking longer career breaks, leading to lower lifetime earnings and pensions. Single mothers, in particular, face financial strain as they balance caregiving and paid work. This "motherhood penalty" remains a significant obstacle to women's full economic inclusion.

In the EU



Gender-based violence

Every woman deserves to live free from violence. Yet, one in three women in the EU has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. This underscores the pervasive and systemic nature of gender-based violence, which overwhelmingly affects women, especially those who experience intersectional discrimination. More resources are needed to make Europe a safe place for women and girls.

Data also shows that for many women, home is not always a safe place. Shockingly, at least two women are killed every day in the EU by an intimate partner or a family member. In fact, 32% of women have endured domestic violence from an intimate partner at some point in their lives. This includes not only physical abuse but also psychological or economic coercion or harm.

The rise of new technologies like social media and AI has led to a surge in cyber violence against women and girls, including online stalking, revenge porn, or doxing. It is part of a broader continuum of violence rooted in the same gender norms that drive violence offline, and its effects are just as damaging. Cyber violence often reaches a wide audience, is frequently carried out anonymously, and remains inadequately regulated.

A significant step forward has been the EU's recent adoption of a directive combatting violence against women and domestic violence, along with its accession to the Istanbul Convention. Unfortunately, the new directive falls short of protecting women against rape as it does not recognise that sex without freely given consent is a crime. In contrast, Spain's recent "Solo sí es sí" law stipulates that consent cannot be assumed by default or through silence.

More recently, Gisèle Pélicot made the brave decision to waive her anonymity and open a mass rape trial to the public. This forced France, and the world, to confront the horrors of sexual violence and the culture that enables it. The trial revealed that her ex-husband had drugged and raped her while orchestrating her assault by dozens of men over nearly a decade. During the proceedings, shame finally shifted from the victim to the perpetrators, and all 51 co-defendants were found guilty.

This case is far from isolated: in France, a rape or attempted rape occurs every 2.5 minutes. Marginalised groups face heightened risks, as migrant women, for instance, are 18 times more likely to be victims of rape. Despite its prevalence, it remains an underreported crime, as many survivors still encounter stigma, dismissal, and inadequate responses from police and the justice system.

Reproductive rights

Sexual and reproductive rights are essential for gender equality. Yet, there are significant gaps in access to abortion care, contraception, maternal healthcare, assisted reproduction, and sexuality education. It's time for everyone to live free, safe, and self-determined lives.

Across Europe, there is broad consensus that abortion should be legal, with at least 75% of adults supporting access to this vital healthcare service. However, while France has followed Slovenia in enshrining the right to abortion in its constitution, access across Europe remains uneven. Currently, more than 20 million women and pregnant people in Europe lack access to safe abortion care.

Malta remains the only EU state that completely bans abortion, even in cases of rape. In Poland, despite years of #StrajkKobiet protests in over 60 cities, lawmakers have failed to lift a near-total abortion ban, and since 2021, at least six women have died because doctors refused to terminate pregnancies despite life-threatening complications, a legally permitted ground for abortion. Since Poland has also become a place of refuge for millions of people fleeing war in Ukraine, women's rights groups now risk prosecution for assisting refugees seeking abortion care.

Even where abortion is legal, access is often restricted. For example, in Romania, abortion care is increasingly expensive, and in some rural areas, only one doctor may be available within a 100-kilometre radius. In Italy, decades after abortion was legalised, anti-abortion groups are now permitted to enter clinics and harass women seeking terminations. Meanwhile in Hungary, restrictive laws now mandate counselling sessions and require women to listen to the foetal heartbeat before obtaining an abortion. These restrictions not only endanger women's physical health but also put severe economic and psychological stress on them and their families.

Despite the fact that sexuality education can prevent gender-based violence and foster the capacity for healthy relationships, there is still strong opposition in countries like Hungary, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, where it has become a politicised issue.

Access to contraception also remains inconsistent, as too many countries have significant gaps in ensuring access to contraceptive supplies, family planning counselling, and online information, which give people real choice over their reproductive lives.

Infertility is another major challenge, affecting one in six couples in Europe. Marginalised communities, including people with disabilities, people of colour, LGBTQIA+ people, face even greater barriers in accessing assisted reproduction technologies due to high costs, limited access, and systemic discrimination.



Progress for LGBTQIA+ rights

Grassroots activists and their communities continue to make positive change happen, despite organised opposition. Addressing hate speech and violence in all its forms remains an urgent challenge.

Approximately 36% of LGBTQIA+ individuals reported feeling discriminated against in at least one area of life in the past year. At the same time, acceptance is steadily increasing across all EU countries: 69% of EU citizens say that lesbian, gay and bisexual people should have the same rights, and 62% support allowing trans people to change their civil documents.

Significant progress has also been made in advancing LGBTQIA+ rights. Slovenia, Estonia and Greece have legalised same-sex marriage, and Croatia now also grants same-sex couples the right to adopt. Greece has also joined Malta, Germany, and France in banning gay conversion therapy, offering greater protection against this harmful practice.

Trans rights have seen significant advances in countries like Belgium, Ireland, and Germany, where individuals can now change their legal gender without undergoing invasive medical procedures.

Despite these positive developments, violence against trans people remains alarmingly high. In Europe, 16 trans individuals were killed between January and September 2023, though many cases go unreported or misreported due to fear of police mistreatment and misgendering. Hate speech against the LGBTQIA+ community is also on the rise, including from politicians in 19 EU member states, with devastating consequences on their suicide rates and mental health.

36% OF LGBTQIA+ INDIVIDUALS
report feeling
DISCRIMINATED



Gender and environment

The gendered dimensions of climate change remain a critical yet often overlooked aspect.

Women are disproportionately impacted by natural disasters, energy poverty, and pollution. For example, in Europe, where temperatures are rising at twice the rate of the global average, heat-related mortality is twice as high in women than in men. In parallel, women tend to be under-represented in the green transition. For example, women make up only 22-32% of the workforce in the conventional energy, renewable energy, and transport sectors. Women may therefore find themselves excluded from many economic opportunities as most job growth is expected in sectors currently dominated by men.

Over the past five years, the EU has emerged as a global leader in climate and environmental action with its landmark **European Green Deal**. While most of the European green policies have been gender-blind, there is growing recognition of the importance of gender mainstreaming to ensure environmental policies are fair, inclusive, and more effective. New ecofeminist movements in Europe are proposing innovative solutions to tackle the climate and environmental crises simultaneously.

Democratic decline and the anti-gender movement

Democratic backsliding and the rise of the anti-gender movement pose significant threats to gender equality progress. To defend democracies, we also need to advance gender equality, and vice versa. This is the kind of urgent work that Europe needs now.

A troubling trend of democratic decline has emerged across the region. Key indicators such as the rule of law, the quality of elections, and media freedom have deteriorated, although the extent varies between countries.

Civic space is also shrinking. Some governments have cut funding for independent organisations, blocked their access to consultations, propped up government-organised NGOs, or engaged in disproportionate auditing as a means of weakening civil society's ability to hold power to account. Activists and organisations working on gender equality face heightened risks, including surveillance, censorship, intimidation, and even harassment for doing their work.

Additionally, the far right has gained momentum across Europe. In countries like Germany and the UK, ideological divides have grown between young women and men on issues like migration and racial justice. Social media exacerbates these divisions, with young people increasingly occupying distinct digital spaces and cultures.

Within this context, the anti-gender movement has flourished while simultaneously fuelling further erosion of democracy. This movement brings together individuals and groups united by the belief that gender is an "ideology". Since the 1990s, it has grown in power and influence, employing sophisticated and adaptable tactics to mobilise against gender equality and human rights by specifically targeting abortion, equal marriage, divorce, sex education, trans rights, IVF treatment, and contraception.

Meanwhile, feminist movements in Europe face several challenges, such as competition for limited resources and a lack of opportunities to connect, strategise, and collaborate, hindering their collective impact. On the other hand, the anti-gender movement capitalises on divisions within progressive movements, leveraging disinformation and social media, and appealing to anxieties about an uncertain future, in order to build their support base and influence national and EU policies.

These dynamics not only threaten government commitments to gender equality but also undermine human rights protections and the health of democracies.



Funding landscape for gender equality

The funding landscape for women's and girls' organisations in Europe is dire.

In the UK, only 1.8% of all grants went to women's and girls' organisations in 2021. Our grantee partners have reported that public funding, whether from the EU or national governments, is increasingly politicised and restrictive in many countries. For the funding that remains, rising inflation means a reduction in the value of existing funds. This shrinking pool of funding, combined with the rise of anti-gender movements and the far-right, poses a serious threat to the hard-won gender rights already in place.

Grassroots feminist, women-led, and trans-led organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to operate in this hostile environment.

Meanwhile, the anti-gender movement has increased its spending: between 2009 and 2018, anti-rights actors spent at least \$707 million in Europe to reverse progress on gender equality – a figure that significantly outpaces spending in support of equality. This widening funding gap makes the need for more resources to sustain and advance gender equality efforts across the continent even more urgent.



Our values

At the heart of our work are values and positions that guide our decisions.

What we believe in

Equality

We believe that all individuals should be treated with respect and be able to achieve their full potential, independent of their gender and background. To achieve gender equality in all areas of life, we aim to address the multiple injustices that shape the lives of women, girls, trans, nonbinary and gender nonconforming people.

Trust

We trust our grantee partners to do what best serves their communities, because they are closer to the issues they are working on than we are. We build trust, respecting the visions, knowledge, and leadership of marginalised women, girls, trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people.

Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of our approach as a pooled fund, as no individual, organisation, or donor can solve all structural issues alone. Alliance members align on funding objectives and collectively steer our work. We also seek to build positive, long-term partnerships with and among grassroots organisations, feminist movements, communities with lived experience of inequality, gender equality experts, as well as other donors.

Transparency and accountability

We aim to be open and transparent about our goals, decisions, investments, and the impact of our work. We always seek to hold ourselves accountable for our actions and their effect on our partners and their wider communities.

Learning

We strive to continuously improve our work. We listen, learn, pilot new ideas, and adapt our own practices by actively seeking feedback on how we can do better from our grantee partners – and then implementing it. We also foster peer learning among our members and grantees, creating safe and brave spaces for them to share insights and strengthen their impact.

Where we stand



Challenging systems

We acknowledge that inequality is rooted in systems of oppression that have historically disadvantaged people based on their gender and identity. Through our funding to those who have been most affected, we work to challenge issues of discrimination, injustice, and exclusion across all aspects of life.



Driving gender-transformative change

Our resources support organisations that empower individuals while also addressing the systems and norms that uphold gender inequality. By using gender-transformative approaches, our grantee partners address root causes and drive lasting change.



Supporting the grassroots

We make sure that our resources reach grassroots activists and organisations who are best positioned to create long-lasting change. Our role is to support their efforts, amplify their voices, and foster connections between them to strengthen their impact.



Embedding intersectionality

We understand that people are affected by gender inequality differently based on various aspects of their identity and background – whether it be gender, sexuality, migration background, race, income, disability, or other factors – without hierarchy. We are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind. Our intersectional approach to grant making uplifts women and marginalised people with diverse needs and addresses multiple challenges simultaneously.



Championing human rights

We are committed to upholding the fundamental human rights of all individuals. Given that we focus on gender equality, we are especially committed to:

Reproductive rights

We believe in reproductive healthcare for all. Reproductive rights – including access to contraception, abortion, fertility treatments, and gender care – are fundamental human rights and a pillar of democracy where individuals live free, safe, and self-determined lives.

Trans rights

Equality for all gender identities and expressions is central to human rights. We also support organisations working with and for trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, championing their rights and amplifying their voices to ensure their inclusion and protection.

Learning
 Collaboration
 Accountability Trust
 Equality

Our approach



Where we fund

Our primary focus is the EU and the UK. Recognising that no country in Europe has yet achieved full gender equality, we take a balanced approach, allocating resources across diverse contexts while acknowledging that strengths, challenges, and opportunities vary between and within countries. As our resources grow, we will expand our funding to other parts of Europe, as defined by the Council of Europe, to broaden our impact and address gender inequality on a wider scale.

Who we fund

We invest in organisations led by and working with marginalised women, trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people that experience inequality due to their gender identities.

Our focus is on those who face compounded barriers, including:

- ⊗ People with a migration background and/or ethnic minorities
- ⊗ Racialised communities
- ⊗ Victims and survivors of violence
- ⊗ People from rural or disadvantaged areas
- ⊗ Those living with disabilities
- ⊗ Individuals perceived as young or old
- ⊗ Those with low incomes

In addition, we acknowledge the harm that rigid and harsh gender roles inflict on boys and men. We are deepening our understanding of how to support efforts fostering healthy masculinities and engaging men as allies to advance gender equality.



Our cross-cutting priorities



The priority areas outlined below reflect a balance between urgent and evolving challenges, as well as the interests and capacities of our member foundations. These areas have been identified to address the most pressing needs while leveraging the strengths of our Alliance.

01 Economic opportunities

Why economic opportunities matter?

Economic exclusion and inequality remain a major obstacle to achieving gender equality in Europe. Expanding opportunities involves improving access to jobs, entrepreneurship, and financial resources, particularly for historically marginalised communities. These opportunities are built on key foundations, including equitable education and training, access to public services and infrastructure, affordable housing, robust social networks, and other factors.

By addressing the root causes of economic exclusion and inequality, while empowering women and marginalised groups, we can unlock greater freedom, independence, and potential.

Improving job prospects and skills for marginalised women, transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people generates positive ripple effects across entire societies. These include reducing the risks and impacts of domestic violence, lowering poverty rates, and increasing access to healthcare and reproductive rights, ultimately advancing gender equality in all areas of life.

How will we advance economic opportunities?

This will remain a focus for the Alliance. Our approach to this priority between 2025 and 2027 will include:

Economic opportunity grants
Providing funding to grassroots gender equality organisations driving impactful and sustainable community-driven solutions that promote economic opportunities for marginalised women, transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people in Europe.

Capacity strengthening
Providing organisational development grants, annual convenings, and access to feminist leadership resources to our grantee partners.

Over a lifetime ———
WOMEN ACCUMULATE
AN EARNINGS GAP OF
37% WITH MEN

02 Movement building

Why movement building matters?

A strong feminist movement is the single most important factor for more gender-equal societies. There is evidence that feminist and women's movements are key to ending violence against women and girls, advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, and leading prodemocratic movements.

Movement building is powerful because it brings together diverse organisations and allies to achieve change on a larger scale. It helps movements identify common goals, share lessons and networks, as well as break down siloes across issues, geographies, and identities. When organised intersectionally, feminist movements can better amplify the work and views of structurally marginalised groups.

By enabling greater collaboration, strategic alignment, and solidarity, we can unlock tangible, long-term wins for gender equality in Europe.

How will we support movement building?

This is a new area of focus for the Alliance. Our approach to this priority between 2025 and 2027 will include:

Consultation
Conducting a sector-wide consultation to better understand the needs and opportunities for strengthening movement building.

Movement building grants
Providing funding to women's funds, networks, and coalitions working at pan-European and national level to foster collaboration and solidarity so that they can collectively advance gender equality.

Capacity strengthening
Providing organisational development grants, annual convenings, and access to feminist leadership resources to our grantee partners.

03 Gender and democracy

Why gender and democracy matter?

Democracy requires continuous care. It is not a fixed destination but an ongoing process. Democratic resilience means that systems and actors have the capacity to respond to and recover from crises by responding, innovating, and adapting to advance democratic values.

Societal shifts demand a re-evaluation of funding strategies, collaboration models, and support structures for gender equality movements. By equipping grassroots organisations to withstand the destabilising pressures of the anti-gender movement, we can strengthen their capacity to defend democracy and advance gender equality more effectively.

How will we advance gender equality and democratic resilience?

This is a new area of focus for the Alliance. Our approach to this priority between 2025 and 2027 will include:

Awareness raising
Our first steps will be to map gaps in gender equality funding and advocate for greater philanthropic support for grassroots movements to counter anti-gender funding.

Opportunity and emergency grants
Providing small, short-term grants that allow grassroots gender equality organisations to take advantage of emerging opportunities or respond to urgent challenges. These grants will provide timely support and bring emergency funding where it is needed most.

Collaboration
Joining and participating in the ecosystem of grantmakers that is mobilising well-informed and coordinated responses to democratic backsliding and the anti-gender movement.

Vision

Our vision is an inclusive Europe where gender equality is achieved for all.

Mission

The Alliance is a philanthropic initiative that brings together specialised and generalist funders to support and strengthen the grassroots gender equality movement in Europe. Through grant-making, capacity strengthening, and awareness raising, the Alliance improves gender equality for all by transforming harmful gender norms and addressing the structural barriers that reinforce inequality and exclusion.

North Star

A well-resourced, intersectional, and impactful gender equality movement in Europe.

Strategic Approach 1



Seed and strengthen the grassroots gender equality movement in Europe.

Strategic Approach 2



Mobilise the philanthropic community to support the grassroots gender equality movement in Europe.

Our Core Assumptions

Grassroots organisations drive lasting change.

A diverse, interconnected, and sustainable gender equality movement is impactful.

Improving economic opportunities leads to greater gender equality.

When organisations work together constructively, it supercharges their impact.

When organisations are nimble they can withstand the political and social pressures posed by the anti-gender movement.

Donor collaboration strengthens the gender equality movement.

Evidence of impact drives donor investment.

Tactics

Provide multi-year core and project funding to grassroots organisations across Europe that are advancing gender equality.

Support collaboration and solidarity within the gender equality movement to increase its collective impact in Europe.

Strengthen the capacity of grassroots organisations so that they can achieve their missions.

Cross-cutting priorities

Economic opportunities

Movement building

Gender & democracy

Tactics

Enable a collaborative space for funders to pool resources, strengthen grant-making practices, and deepen their knowledge of the most impactful ways to support the gender equality movement.

Capture and communicate the contributions that the Alliance and its grantee partners are making to advance gender equality in Europe.

Influence the philanthropic sector to increase its investment in the grassroots gender equality movement in Europe.

Changes we want to see

Grassroot organisations are better equipped to respond to needs, seize opportunities, and fight back against the anti-gender movement.

Marginalised women, girls, trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people have greater rights and opportunities.

Grassroot organisations in the gender equality movement are better supported by and connected to each other, enabling collective learning and action.

More philanthropic funding for the gender equality movement in Europe.

Funders improve their grant-making practices that put trust, accountability, and inclusivity into action.

There is better evidence, narratives, and awareness of the impact of the gender equality movement in Europe within philanthropy.



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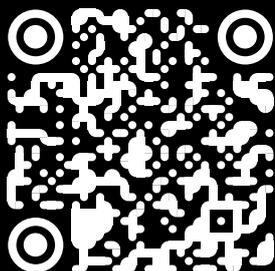
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