

FEM-ABLE



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Promoting women's participation
in the political domain

POLICY TOOLKIT

Deliverable D2.2

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Promoting Women's Participation In The Political
Domain

POLICY TOOLKIT

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Policy Toolkit report from the FEM-ABLE project. Our project, co-funded by the Citizens, Equality, Rights & Values Programme of the European Union, is an ambitious initiative aimed at promoting gender equality in political decision-making. The FEM-ABLE project partner organisations based in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden, are taking a proactive approach to address the underrepresentation of women in politics at all levels: local, national, and European.

The FEM-ABLE project's overarching goal is to develop evidence-based national strategies to enhance gender equality in politics. We are working to investigate and understand the underlying causes of women's lower political power scores. Our commitment extends to finding innovative ways to encourage and support women's participation in politics, with a focus on those who hold or aspire to hold key political positions.

Our ambitions and objectives for the FEM-ABLE project are aligned with recent EU policy initiatives and grounded in academic literature. We aim to create a research-based resources, including the development national strategies that promote equality in political decision-making, emphasizing sharing best practices and providing impact assessment tools to monitor the effectiveness of these strategies. We are dedicated to collaborating with local political parties and national authorities involved in gender equality, integrating our research findings into national policies through dialogues, conferences, and roundtables.

The Policy Toolkit report you are about to delve into embodies these objectives and goals. It provides a comprehensive analysis of women's current political participation in Europe, examining the barriers women face and highlighting effective strategies for their engagement. We've collected detailed national reports from each partner country involved in the FEM-ABLE project and showcased good practices from around Europe that have successfully encouraged women's political participation.

The report is split into several key sections that each tackle a different aspect of women's political participation.

First, we look at the current situation of women in politics in Europe. We provide data on women's representation in national parliaments and discuss the use of quotas to increase this representation. We also explore the barriers that women face when they want to get involved in politics.

Next, we turn our attention to the various policies and practices used across Europe to encourage more equal gender representation in politics. These include initiatives by the Council of Europe, the European Institute for Gender Equality, and other important organizations.

One of the main parts of our report is the results of a questionnaire on people's views about women in politics. We analyze these results in detail, looking at different groups of people and their attitudes towards women's political participation.

The final part of our toolkit presents national reports from each partner country involved in the FEM-ABLE project: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. These reports give a more in-depth look at the situation in each country and can help us learn from different experiences and approaches.

Lastly, we present a collection of good practices. These are examples from all over Europe of successful methods and initiatives that have helped to increase women's participation in politics.

This report is a practical tool, filled with information and examples that we hope will be used to drive change and encourage more women to take part in politics. We believe that by sharing this knowledge, we can help to create a more equal and inclusive political environment in Europe.

By reading this report, we hope you will join us in understanding the current state of women's participation in politics, and be inspired to take action toward a more inclusive and equitable political future in Europe. Together, we can turn the tide on women's political representation and empower more women to have their voices heard.

2. State of the art of women's political participation in Europe

2.1. Statistics of representation in national parliaments

The following table presents a comprehensive analysis of women's representation in the political bodies of selected European countries, namely Portugal, Lithuania, Greece, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, and Sweden. It also provides data for the European Parliament as a regional governing body.

The table provides detailed information about each political institution's last election year, total number of seats, the number and percentage of seats held by women representatives, the percentage of women candidates, and voter turnout.

It sheds light on the progress made in promoting gender equality in these political bodies, highlighting the representation of women in both candidate selection and final elected representatives. It also aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the political participation of women in these nations. For some nations, data regarding the percentage of women candidates or voter turnout is not currently available (-).

Country	Political body	Year of last election	Total seats	Total women reps	% women reps	% women candidates	Voter turnout
	European Parliament	2019	705		39%		
Portugal	Assembly of the Republic	2022	230	85	37%	-	52%
Lithuania	Seimas	2020	141	38	27%	(584/1754) 33%	-
Greece	Hellenic Parliament	2019	300	62	21%	-	58%
Italy	Chamber of Deputies	2022	400	129	32%	(1,396/3,145)	64%

						44%	
Spain	Congress of Deputies	2019	350	154	44%	-	66%
Cyprus	House of Representatives	2021	56	8	14%	(160/658) 24%	66%
Sweden	Parliament	2022	349	161	46%	-	84%

Sources: IPU PARLINE Global data on national parliaments: <https://data.ipu.org/content/parline-global-data-national-parliaments>; Women in the European Parliament (infographics): <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20190226STO28804/women-in-the-european-parliament-infographics>

According to the data, the representation of women in the parliaments of Portugal, Lithuania, Greece, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, and Sweden varies significantly, spanning from 14% in Cyprus to 46% in Sweden.

For the countries where data is available regarding women candidates, it is interesting to note the following:

	Women	Men	Total
LITHUANIA (2020 elections)			
Number of candidates	584	1170	1754
Number of elected representatives	38	103	141
Ratio of candidates: elected representatives	7%	9%	
Percentage of candidates	33%	67%	
Percentage of elected representatives	27%	73%	
ITALY (2022 elections)			
Number of candidates	1396	1749	3145
Number of elected representatives	129	271	400
Ratio of candidates: elected representatives	9%	15%	
Percentage of candidates	44%	56%	
Percentage of elected representatives	32%	68%	
CYPRUS (2021 elections)			
Number of candidates	160	498	658
Number of elected representatives	8	48	56
Ratio of candidates: elected representatives	5%	10%	
Percentage of candidates	24%	76%	
Percentage of elected representatives	14%	86%	

As we can see in the data, the ratio of candidates to elected representatives in all cases is inferior for women; in the case of Italy it is nearly double and in the case of Cyprus it is doubled. This indicates that for that particular election, in Italy and Cyprus, men were elected twice as much than women.

When examining the percentage of women and men candidates in relation to the percentage of women and men elected representatives, the numbers are even more striking:

- For Lithuania, while 33% of candidates were women, only 27% of elected representatives were so. Inversely, while 67% of candidates were men, these candidates got a 73% of seats.
- For Italy, the gap increased to 44% candidacy versus 33% elected membership for women candidates, in contrast with the 56% candidacy and 68% elected membership.
- For Cyprus, while 24% of candidates were women, these only got 14% representation in the House. Men candidates, on the other hand, covered 76% of all candidates, and were elected to represent 86% of the House.

This shows that, for these given countries and the given elections, women candidates not only were considerably less, but they were also voted considerably less than their men counterparts.

Nevertheless, further research needs to be undertaken to fully understand the current situation of representation of women in politics, addressing issues such as:

- Quality of power positions should be examined, as broad representation does not necessarily mean increased access to the highest positions of power.
- Statistics on territorial representation might show differences in women access to political positions regarding national parliaments. Exploring these differences might provide insights on local practices that can be extrapolated to higher territorial levels and vice versa.
- Historical background for each country should be examined, as this might indicate cases of success for rapid increase in presence and representation of women in politics (for example, it can indicate whether quotas are being effective in a specific context, or whether equality policies to foster women in politics are not producing long term effects).

2.2. Quotas

Legally mandated quotas assure that a minimum of women candidates are present. Quotas in partner countries are as follow in accordance to the data available in IPU PARLINE Global data on national parliaments:

- Portugal: Legislated candidate quotas. Candidate lists must include a minimum of 33% women and 33% men.
- Spain: Legislated candidate quotas. Candidate lists must have a balanced proportion of women and men, so that candidates of either sex make up at least 40% of total membership. Where the number of seats to be covered is less than five, the balance between women and men shall be as even as possible.
- Greece: Legislated candidate quotas. For the approval of the electoral lists of candidates of political parties, of a coalition of cooperating parties and independent candidates, the number of candidates from each sex must be at least equal to 40% of the total number of their candidates, respectively, per electoral district. Any decimal number is rounded to the next integer if the fraction is equal to half the unit and more. This applies to local, national and European elections.
- Italy: Under penalty of ineligibility, the lists of candidates for the Chamber of Deputies in multi-member districts must comprise candidates of both genders in alternating order (known as a zebra list). The lists of candidates in single-member districts at a national level should not comprise more than 60% of candidates of either gender. No more than 60% of candidates at the top of lists presented in multi-member districts at a national level should be of either gender. The National Central Office ensures compliance with such provisions.
- Cyprus: Voluntary political party quotas.
- Lithuania: Voluntary political party quotas.
- Sweden: Voluntary political party quotas whereby several parties require that women and men be equally represented on candidate lists.

It is interesting to note that in the case of Sweden, despite there being no legally mandated quotas beyond those established internally by each political party, the country holds the highest percentage of parliamentary representation on behalf of women. It also shows the highest voter turnout (84%), with nearly a 20 point difference in regards to the next highest voter turnout amongst partner countries (Cyprus and Spain at 66%). This might indicate that higher voter turnouts might result in more balanced gender representation amongst political institutions. Further exploration needs to be undertaken in regards to this possibility. In case there is a relation between voter turnout and equality in representation, practices to foster voter turnout might prove to have a positive effect on overall voter preferences in regards to equality in representation.

2.3. Barriers to political participation of women

Based on partner knowledge and initial desk research, we have identified a set of obstacles and barriers that might explain the reason why women participate less in politics, and when they do, why they are chosen less than men candidates.

1. Gender bias: there may be conscious or unconscious bias against women in politics and leadership roles, making it more difficult for them to be taken seriously or gain access to opportunities.
2. Stereotyping: women may be stereotyped as being less competent or less ambitious than men, which can discourage them from pursuing leadership roles.
3. Lack of role models: when there are few women in leadership positions, it can be difficult for other women to envision themselves in those roles.
4. Double standards: women may face higher expectations and scrutiny than men when it comes to their behavior and performance in leadership roles.
5. Work-life balance: women may feel that the demands of political or leadership roles would make it difficult to balance their work and family responsibilities
6. Glass ceiling and wage gap in political careers of women: systemic barriers that prevent women from reaching higher positions and receiving equal pay as their men counterparts in the political field, such as preferential treatment, sexism, harassment and hostile work environment, limited networking opportunities (as many times these happen “after-hours”), lack of family-friendly policies, and lack of adequate promotion policies.
7. Traditional assignment of administrative role to women within political organisations: given the pervasiveness of gender roles within political organisations, women tend to take on tasks more related to administration, logistics, resource and team management, rather than more visible and directive roles focused on decision-making and on informing such decisions to staff and voter base.

Ultimately, the reasons why women are underrepresented in politics and leadership roles are complex and multifaceted and we will try to give a glimpse in this first research in the FEM-ABLE project to understand the challenges that women face when attempting to break through these barriers and succeed in these traditionally men-dominated fields.

Through our research and analysis, we have validated the existence of the above barriers, as well as identified additional barriers specific to each of the national contexts of the FEM-ABLE partner countries, and identified strategies to address these barriers at country level.

2.4. EIGE’s gender balance in politics periodic monitoring

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has identified that political assemblies and executives frequently fail to reflect the gender diversity of their represented populations, with

women often significantly under-represented. As of their last report on November 2022¹, 38.9% of members of the European Parliament were women, with Roberta Metsola serving as its President. The European Commission demonstrated full gender parity at that time.

Women accounted for 32.4% of members in national parliaments of the EU Member States. Several nations, including Finland, Denmark, Spain, Belgium, and Austria, had near equal gender representation, with at least 40% women. Conversely, women constituted less than 20% of parliamentarians in Greece, Cyprus, and Hungary.

Eleven EU Member States have introduced legislative quotas to improve gender balance, while Malta implemented a post-election corrective mechanism. However, only Spain and Slovenia have met or exceeded these quota targets. Quota systems have led to a slight increase in female representation in these countries, but the impact has been modest overall.

Within EU political parties, women held 26% of major party leadership roles and 37.1% of deputy leader positions as of May 2022. In the realm of government ministries, six Member States had a female Prime Minister in November 2022, but senior ministers remained predominantly male (67.7%).

On the regional and local level, women constituted just over a third of assembly members. Only four Member States had gender-balanced representation at both regional and local levels. Women led approximately one in five assemblies at these levels, but in many cases, the number of women leaders was one in ten or fewer.

2.5. Overview of policies and practices in Europe to promote gender equality in politics and power positions

Europe has made significant strides towards promoting gender equality in politics and power positions over the past several decades, using a combination of legislative measures, institutional policies, and grassroots initiatives. Below are some of the key strategies employed.

- **Legislative Quotas:** This involves the implementation of laws to ensure a certain minimum proportion of each gender in parliamentary candidacies or party lists. For instance, as of

¹ Available at: https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/20231036_pdf_mh0523044enn_002.pdf

2022, 11 EU Member States had introduced legislative quotas. This policy is seen as a direct intervention to redress the gender imbalance in political representation.

- **Voluntary Party Quotas:** Some political parties have implemented internal policies to ensure balanced representation among their candidates, beyond any national legal requirements. These voluntary measures can vary greatly from party to party but can significantly impact gender balance, especially in countries where a few key parties dominate the political landscape.
- **Gender-Equality Policies:** Some countries have enacted broader gender-equality policies that impact political representation. For example, the principle of gender mainstreaming, which involves integrating a gender perspective into all policy areas, is widely adopted within the European Union.
- **Training and Mentorship Programs:** These are designed to equip women with the skills, knowledge, and networks they need to run for office and to thrive once elected. Programs might include training in public speaking, campaigning, policy formulation, negotiation, and leadership.
- **Awareness Raising and Advocacy:** Civil society organizations and activists play a crucial role in highlighting the gender imbalance in politics, advocating for change, and pressuring political parties and institutions to commit to gender equality.
- **Gender Parity in Government Appointments:** This approach involves seeking a balanced representation of women and men in government appointments. Some European governments have committed to gender balance in their cabinets, leading to an increase in women's representation at the highest levels of national government.
- **Gender-Responsive Electoral Systems:** Some countries have altered their electoral systems to be more conducive to gender balance. For instance, proportional representation systems where voters choose between party lists (as opposed to individual candidates) tend to be more favorable to women's representation, particularly if parties are required to alternate between women and men on their lists (a practice known as "zippering").

Despite these policies and practices, gender equality in political representation has not been fully achieved in Europe. Ongoing challenges include societal gender norms and stereotypes, political culture, gendered patterns of political recruitment, and the balancing of political careers with other responsibilities, among others. Addressing these issues requires continual commitment from all stakeholders, including political parties, governments, civil society, and the electorate.

In the next section, we provide some practices at EU and supra-national level in order to shed light on different initiatives that are taking place in Europe to further the participation of women in politics. These programmes and institutions provide ample information and resources that could serve as the basis for the implementation of the national recommendations highlighted in the National Reports (see annex for country specific recommendations).

2.5.1. Council of Europe: Balanced participation in decision-making

The Council of Europe emphasizes the importance of balanced participation between women and men in political and public decision-making for achieving justice and democracy. However, men still represent roughly three-quarters of national governments and parliaments on average among member states. The Council has been striving to correct this imbalance for decades, advocating coordinated actions in various areas, implementing standards, and promoting policies to reach parity democracy.

Key initiatives and materials include²:

- Recommendation Rec (2003) 3: This recommendation is for member states on achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making.
- Various studies and reports: They include analyses of women's political participation at local levels in specific countries, toolkits for involving young women and girls from disadvantaged groups, and strategies for preventing and combating sexism.
- Factsheets and data collections: These provide information about gender equality in parliaments, sexism, harassment, and violence against women in parliaments, and the participation of women and men in political and public decision-making.
- Regional studies: These assess women's political representation in specific regions such as the Eastern Partnership Countries.
- Reports on specific topics: These cover subjects like parental leave in member states, women's individual voting rights, and good practices for achieving gender-balanced representation.

² For further detail on different recommendations, toolkits and materials visit: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/balanced-participation>

The Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe have issued resolutions and recommendations to boost women's political representation and participation.

Reports and resources from other organisations, such as the OSCE, the European Commission, the European Institute for Gender Equality, UN Women, UNDP, and the OECD, are also highlighted. These materials cover topics ranging from gender balance on corporate boards to the promotion of gender equality in public life.

2.5.2. Women @PACE

Women@PACE is an informal, cross-party platform open to all female members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Created by Secretary General of PACE, Despina Chatzivassiliou-Tsovilis, in 2022, the group aims to provide a space for women in the Assembly to connect, exchange ideas, and initiate debates.³

The group seeks to:

- Amplify diverse women's voices by allowing discussion across party lines and national delegations.
- Address societal issues from a woman's perspective within the Council of Europe's mandate.
- Enhance women's participation in the Parliamentary Assembly.
- Build synergies with other women's groups in national parliaments and parliamentary assemblies.

The group shares experiences, like Ireland's Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality, and discusses challenges women face, such as climate change's impact on women, hate speech, and the gender pay gap. They have also taken action in areas like identifying barriers in breast cancer detection and treatment, and combatting violence against women and children.

Recent news feed highlights their discussions around innovation and technology for gender equality, education, and leadership, with UN Women Deputy Executive Director, and their focus on health issues like breast cancer.

³ For more information consult <https://pace.coe.int/en/pages/women-pace>

2.5.3. European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) serves as the European Union's Knowledge Centre on Gender Equality.⁴ It is the primary source for information on gender equality within the EU and works towards creating a Union of Equality where everyone has equal opportunities to thrive and participate in society.

EIGE offers its expert knowledge, research, data, and tools to help policy makers design inclusive and transformative measures that promote gender equality in all areas of life. They also work closely with various partners to raise awareness at both the EU and national levels, as well as in EU candidate countries and potential candidate countries.

Key activities of EIGE include:

- Researching, collecting, and analyzing data on gender equality from an intersectional perspective.
- Improving gender statistics and data collections.
- Communicating their data and information with a hope-based approach.
- Measuring the state of gender equality at EU and Member State levels.
- Providing methodological tools and technical support for gender mainstreaming in all EU and national policies.
- Cooperating with various institutions, organizations, universities, research centers, the media, and EU sister agencies.

EIGE has several ongoing projects such as the Gender Equality Index 2023 focusing on the European Green Deal, data collection on gender equality action plans, good practices on Gender Mainstreaming in the European Green Deal, and increased capacity of EU candidate countries to measure gender equality policies impact. They also focus on topics like access to specialized healthcare services for women and girls fleeing war, gender equality in COVID-19 recovery, cyber violence against women, and justice for victims of femicide.

EIGE supports better informed policy-making at EU and Member State levels by providing high-quality reports on the progress of gender equality in the areas of concern chosen by the Presidencies of the Council of the EU.

⁴ For more information consult: <https://eige.europa.eu/>.

2.5.4. European Committee of the Regions: For more women in politics

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has launched an initiative called "For more women in politics" to promote gender representation within local and regional politicians in Europe. Despite approximately one million elected local and regional office-holders in Europe, only about 30% are women. Therefore, this initiative aims to overcome the barriers women face in entering politics and ensure gender equality, a core value for the European Union.⁵

The CoR aims to leverage the expertise of European associations and partner organizations and function as a platform for exchanging best practices. It has established an ambitious strategy for achieving gender balance in CoR member participation, adopted in 2019. It urges Member States and the European Council to nominate and appoint gender-balanced delegations to the CoR, showcase the work of female members, include women on all panels, and provide training to support gender parity. The CoR has also set a fixed target to achieve better gender balance in management positions by 2025, in line with the European Commission's 40% initiative.

The CoR will act on four fronts to foster gender parity at all levels: promoting the CoR opinion on the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, mainstreaming communication activities on gender, working with external and internal stakeholders, and raising awareness among CoR members and staff. This is in alignment with the von der Leyen Commission's commitment to achieve a "Union of Equality" by 2025.

2.5.5. The European Charter for Equality

The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life is a critical instrument in fostering gender equality at the local level, created by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). The Charter is a document open for signature by individual towns, cities, and regions within Europe, providing a framework for concrete and effective action on equality between women and men.⁶

The Charter establishes a platform for public commitment, calling for long-term, sustainable strategies and providing concrete methods to achieve gender equality. By signing the Charter, a

⁵ For more information visit <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/pages/gender-balance.aspx>.

⁶ For more information visit <https://charter-equality.eu/>.

municipality or region commits to use its powers and partnerships to advance equality in all areas of local life, both within its own institutions and in its local communities.

The Charter is divided into several parts:

- Preamble: This section lays out the context and principles that guide the Charter's implementation.
- Part One – Equality of Women and Men Constitutes a Fundamental Right: This part discusses the universal recognition of equality as a fundamental human right and the importance of local and regional governments in promoting this right.
- Part Two – The Commitments: This is the core of the Charter, which details the specific commitments of the signatory to promote gender equality in six areas: the role of local and regional governments as employers, service providers, and buyers of goods and services; participation in political life; representation in decision-making processes; combating gender-based violence; and promoting diversity and non-discrimination.
- Part Three – Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation: This part focuses on the practical steps involved in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the commitments made under the Charter. It discusses the need for action plans, regular monitoring, and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the efforts towards gender equality.

Initiatives and strategies arising from the Charter vary widely, reflecting the diversity of the local and regional governments that sign it. These may include gender-sensitive budgeting, training for staff on gender issues, public awareness campaigns, policies to support work-life balance, initiatives to encourage women's political participation, and actions to combat gender-based violence.

Overall, the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life serves as an essential tool for local and regional governments to foster gender equality within their respective jurisdictions. As more municipalities and regions sign the Charter, the wider the scope for its impact, creating a Europe where gender equality in local life becomes a reality.

2.5.6. European Women's Lobby (EWL)

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) was founded in 1990, with roots tracing back to a 1987 conference. It was created to promote and protect women's interests at the European level, especially in light of expanding EU activities affecting women's daily lives. The EWL serves as an

intermediary between women's organisations and EU institutions, informing decision-makers about women's rights and needs and ensuring gender perspective in policy and legislation. It also aids women's organisations in participating at the EU level.⁷

Today, the EWL is the largest umbrella network of women's associations in Europe, representing over 2000 organisations in 26 EU Member States, three Candidate Countries, one former EU Member State, one European Free Trade Association country, and 17 Europe-wide organisations.

EWL envisions a Feminist Europe, where women and girls have equal rights and participation in power and decision-making structures across all levels of society, are free from all forms of oppression and violence, and their contributions in social, political, and cultural life are recognised and celebrated.

Their mission is to bring an inclusive, fearless, and loud feminist voice into the European political arena. They work as a catalyst, connecting different actors to bring transformational change at both national and European levels.

EWL's core values include equality between women and men, diversity, peace, dignity, justice, respect, and solidarity. They adhere to five key principles: Women's rights are Human Rights, Equality, Autonomy, Participation, and Inclusion. One of their focus areas includes women's participation in decision-making and leadership, in politics, business, and broader leadership roles.

2.5.7. International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics

iKNOW Politics is a joint project of International IDEA, the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Established in 2007, the platform seeks to increase women's participation and effectiveness in political life.⁸

iKNOW Politics offers a unique platform that combines the expertise of these organizations, providing a resource for experts in the area of women's political participation and facilitating dialogue, exchange, and knowledge creation for those promoting women's political involvement.

The platform works to build women's skills and knowledge through information and communication technology, generate collective knowledge about women in politics worldwide, share experiences and good practices, and provide an online forum for connecting women globally. It also promotes

⁷ For more information visit <https://www.womenlobby.org/>.

⁸ For more information visit <https://www.iknowpolitics.org/>.

positive norms regarding women's equal participation and representation in decision-making and political life.

iKNOW Politics contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically to target 5.5, which is to "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life."

The focus areas of the platform include elections, parliaments & representatives, political parties, women's leadership, advocacy & lobbying, and youth.

2.5.8. Women Political Leaders

Women Political Leaders (WPL) is a global network of female politicians that seeks to increase both the number and influence of women in political leadership positions. The foundation, headquartered in Reykjavik, Iceland, works to promote the positive impact that women can have in politics through communication, connection, and community-building efforts.⁹

WPL conducts annual summits which serve as large gatherings of female politicians to discuss major global challenges and share their experiences. The outcome of these summits are declarations intended to aid in reducing gender inequality.

WPL also engages in various research studies to provide data and evidence to support their advocacy for more women in politics. Some of these studies include insights on women's political careers, a toolkit for boosting women's economic empowerment, the state of mental healthcare in Europe, the impact of iron deficiency on women's health, and the role of social media in advancing women in politics.

Furthermore, WPL confers awards to recognize and celebrate the achievements of leading women politicians or countries that have made strides towards achieving gender balance in politics. Categories of these awards include Lifetime Achievement, Trailblazer Award, and Country Award.

The policy focus of WPL spans areas such as Leadership & Governance, Digitalisation & Technology, Sustainable Development Goals, Peace & Security, Economics & Finance, and Health. These policy focus areas are intended to address gender disparities and promote women's participation and influence in political decision-making processes.

⁹ For more information visit <https://www.womenpoliticalleaders.org/>.

2.5.9. UN Women

The EU and its member states are active participants of UN Women. UN Women is a United Nations entity that is dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide. Officially known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women was established in 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁰

UN Women's mission is to develop and uphold standards and to create an environment in which every woman and girl can exercise her human rights and live up to her full potential. This entity works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life.

Key focus areas of UN Women include:

- Leadership and political participation - encouraging women's leadership and equal participation in political, economic, and public life.
- Economic empowerment - ensuring women have a fair share of economic resources.
- Ending violence against women - providing programs and measures to prevent and end violence against women and girls.
- Peace and security - supporting women's participation in peace processes and reducing their risks of experiencing violence during conflict.
- Humanitarian action - ensuring the needs of women and girls are addressed in crisis situations like natural disasters or conflicts.
- Governance and national planning - working with countries to ensure gender equality is central to national development planning and budgeting.
- Sustainable Development Goals - working towards the achievement of gender equality as outlined in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality, and in all deliberations and agreements linked to the 2030 Agenda. The entity works to position gender equality as fundamental to the Sustainable Development Goals, and engages with UN and non-UN partners to build momentum around related issues.

¹⁰ For more information visit <https://www.unwomen.org/en>.

3. Results of the questionnaire

“Perceptions and attitudes on women's political participation”

3.1. Structure of the questionnaire and its analysis

3.1.1. Structure and items of the questionnaire

As part of the research to further study the barriers and strategies underlying the political participation of women in Europe, we conducted a questionnaire on “Perceptions and attitudes on women's political participation” in all FEM-ABLE project partner countries (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden). The questionnaire was released between April and May 2023 through mailings and social networks, and was answered anonymously. In this section we present the results of the questionnaire, aimed at understanding voters' perceptions about the participation of women in politics and leadership positions. The study was designed to shed light on the respondents' attitudes towards various aspects of gender equality in the political sphere, including gender bias, role models, work-life balance, and strategies to enhance female representation.

Respondents were asked to indicate country of residence, gender, age, educational level and political inclination (optional), and answer the following questions based on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

The questions were as follows:

- Q1 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Stereotypes about women’s abilities hinder their progress in politics.]
- Q2 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women in politics are often perceived as emotional rather than rational decision-makers.]
- Q3 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women often feel the need to downplay their femininity or adopt more masculine traits to be taken seriously as leaders.]
- Q4 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women are as capable as men in political leadership roles.]

- Q5 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I usually feel men candidates are better qualified.]
- Q6 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Having diverse representation in leadership positions is important.]
- Q7 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I have witnessed or experienced gender bias or discrimination in politics.]
- Q8 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I have felt discouraged from pursuing a leadership role because of my gender.]
- Q9 Regarding gender bias and stereotypes faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Men and women have different leadership styles.]
- Q10 Regarding role models of women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [The presence of more women in political leadership positions would inspire other women to pursue political careers.]
- Q11 Regarding role models of women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I can easily identify women political role models in my country.]
- Q12 Regarding role models of women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I have had a women role model or mentor in a leadership position who inspired or supported me.]
- Q13 Regarding role models of women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women frequently occupy leadership positions in my workplace or community.]
- Q14 Regarding double standards and scrutiny faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women in politics are judged more harshly for their appearance than men.]
- Q15 Regarding double standards and scrutiny faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women politicians are more likely to be criticized for their personal life choices compared to men.]
- Q16 Regarding double standards and scrutiny faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women are held to higher standards or face more scrutiny than men in leadership roles.]
- Q17 Regarding double standards and scrutiny faced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women in leadership face a “double bind” where they are expected to be both assertive and nurturing.]
- Q18 Regarding work-life balance experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [It is more challenging for women in politics to maintain a healthy work-life balance in relation to other career choices.]
- Q19 Regarding work-life balance experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [It is more challenging for women in politics to maintain a healthy work-life balance in relation to their men counterparts.]
- Q20 Regarding work-life balance experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Political organizations should implement family-friendly policies to support women’s participation.]
- Q21 Regarding work-life balance experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I have felt that I had to choose between family responsibilities and pursuing a leadership role.]
- Q22 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Wage disparities between men and women politicians exist in my country.]
- Q23 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women in politics face more hostile work environments, including sexism and discrimination, than their men counterparts.]

- Q24 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I have witnessed or experienced sexual harassment in the workplace or in politics.]
- Q25 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women are less likely to be promoted to leadership positions compared to men with similar qualifications and experience.]
- Q26 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Women in political organizations are often limited to administrative roles instead of decision-making positions.]
- Q27 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Political organizations should actively promote women to decision-making roles to achieve gender equality.]
- Q28 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [I have seen women being talked over or interrupted in meetings or discussions more frequently than their men counterparts.]
- Q29 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Societal norms and expectations limit women's political aspirations and opportunities.]
- Q30 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Traditional gender roles and expectations discourage women from pursuing political careers.]
- Q31 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [The cultural norms in my country support women's participation in politics.]
- Q32 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [There are equal opportunities for women and men to pursue leadership roles in my community.]
- Q33 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [The media in my country portrays women politicians fairly and accurately.]
- Q34 Regarding other barriers experienced by women in politics, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements: [Media coverage of women in politics often focuses on their appearance rather than their achievements and qualifications.]
- Q35 In order to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, we should... [...encourage women to pursue leadership roles from a young age.]
- Q36 In order to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, we should... [...implement diversity and inclusion policies in the workplace and in politics.]
- Q37 In order to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, we should... [...provide mentorship and support for women in leadership positions.]
- Q38 In order to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, we should... [...engage in awareness raising campaigns.]

3.1.2. Structure of the analysis

A total of 489 individuals participated in the survey, including a mix of men and women from diverse age groups, educational backgrounds, and political affiliations. The survey comprised a series of 38 questions, where respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), as follows:

1. Totally disagree
2. Disagree
3. I am not sure
4. Agree
5. Totally agree

We analysed results based on two focuses:

- By overall responses regarding the different barriers and strategies:
 - Bias and stereotypes (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9)
 - Role models (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13)
 - Double standards and scrutiny (Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17)
 - Work-life Bbalance (Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21)
 - Other barriers (hostile work environments, media portrayals, cultural norms, etc.) (Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q34)
 - Strategies (Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38)
- By demographic characteristics of the respondents:
 - All respondents
 - By gender (men / women / non-binary)
 - By age (under 40 / 40 and over)
 - By education level (non-tertiary education / university degree or higher)
 - By political affiliation (left / non-disclosure / right & other)

In the analysis by demographic group, questions were grouped into four categories:

- 22 questions with a negative correlation to gender equality (a high score means less gender equality)

- 11 questions with a positive correlation to gender equality (a high score means more gender equality)
- 1 question on perception on leadership style differences between men and women
- 4 questions related to strategies to overcome gender inequality in politics.

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked open ended questions about additional barriers and strategies, which were also analysed to identify additional information relevant to our research. The results from the open-ended questions can be found in each national report (see list of annexes).

3.2. Demographics of respondents

The demographic characteristics of the 489 respondents were as follows:

Gender	Total	%
Man	98	20%
Woman	384	77%
Non-binary	7	1%

Age	Total	%
Average	41	8%
Max	83	17%
Min	16	3%
Median	39	8%
Below 40 years old	255	52%
40 years old and over	234	48%

Last completed education cycle	Total	%
Primary education	4	1%
Secondary education	47	9%
Post-secondary education (technical degrees and/or vocational education and training)	52	10%
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	150	30%
Master's degree or equivalent	189	38%
Doctoral degree or equivalent	46	9%
n/a	1	0%

Political affiliation and/or endorsement and/or preference in the political spectrum (answer optional)	Total	%
n/a (non-disclosure)	274	55%
Left	162	33%
Right	26	5%
Other	27	5%

Country of residence	Total	%
Cyprus	85	17%
Greece	96	19%
Italy	80	16%
Lithuania	80	16%
Portugal	31	6%
Spain	95	19%
Sweden	22	4%

It should be noted that the political affiliation question was optional, and therefore, a significant number of respondents chose not to disclose their political leanings. The majority of those who did disclose their political affiliations leaned towards the left.

3.3. Overall results regarding barriers and strategies

3.3.1. Interpretation of results by barrier

Based on the average responses to the questions by all respondents, the following interpretations can be made:

Bias and Stereotypes (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9). The respondents seem to agree that stereotypes hinder women's progress in politics (Q1: 3.8) and women often feel the need to downplay their femininity or adopt more masculine traits to be taken seriously as leaders (Q3: 3.6). However, it appears that respondents do not strongly perceive women in politics as emotional rather than rational decision-makers (Q2: 3.1). They strongly agree that women are as capable as men in political leadership roles (Q4: 4.7) and disagree with the statement that men candidates are usually better qualified (Q5: 1.6). There's a strong consensus on the importance of diverse representation in leadership positions (Q6: 4.5). Respondents are less clear on whether they have personally witnessed or experienced gender bias or discrimination in politics (Q7: 3.3) and whether

gender discourages individuals from pursuing leadership roles (Q8: 2.6). Responses are neutral on whether men and women have different leadership styles (Q9: 3.3).

Role Models (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13). The respondents agree that the presence of more women in political leadership positions would inspire other women to pursue political careers (Q10: 4.4). They are somewhat less sure about being able to easily identify women political role models in their country (Q11: 3.6) or having had a women role model or mentor in a leadership position who inspired or supported them (Q12: 3.5). Respondents slightly agree that women frequently occupy leadership positions in their workplace or community (Q13: 3.4).

Double Standards and Scrutiny (Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17). The respondents agree that women in politics are judged more harshly for their appearance than men (Q14: 4.2) and that they are more likely to be criticized for their personal life choices compared to men (Q15: 4.2). They also agree that women are held to higher standards or face more scrutiny than men in leadership roles (Q16: 4.1) and that they face a "double bind" where they are expected to be both assertive and nurturing (Q17: 4.0).

Work-Life Balance (Q18, Q19, Q20, Q21). Responses suggest that it is somewhat more challenging for women in politics to maintain a healthy work-life balance in relation to other career choices (Q18: 3.3) and in relation to their men counterparts (Q19: 3.6). Respondents strongly agree that political organizations should implement family-friendly policies to support women's participation (Q20: 4.2). However, they are not sure about having to choose between family responsibilities and pursuing a leadership role (Q21: 3.3).

Other Barriers (Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, Q31, Q32, Q33, Q34). Respondents agree that wage disparities exist between men and women politicians (Q22: 3.6), that women in politics face more hostile work environments (Q23: 4.1), and that women are less likely to be promoted to leadership positions compared to men with similar qualifications and experience (Q25: 3.9). Respondents also agree that women in political organizations are often limited to administrative roles (Q26: 3.7) and that political organizations should actively promote women to decision-making roles to achieve gender equality (Q27: 4.3). They agree that women are often interrupted more frequently in meetings (Q28: 3.8), that societal norms and expectations limit women's political aspirations and opportunities (Q29: 3.9), and that traditional gender roles discourage women from pursuing political careers (Q30: 3.9). The cultural norms in their country seem to not be supportive of women's participation in politics (Q31: 2.8). Equal opportunities for women and men to pursue leadership roles in their community seem to be lacking (Q32: 2.7), and the media in their country does not seem to portray women politicians fairly and accurately (Q33: 2.6). Media coverage of women in politics often focuses on their appearance rather than their achievements and qualifications (Q34: 3.5).

3.3.2. Interpretation of results by strategy

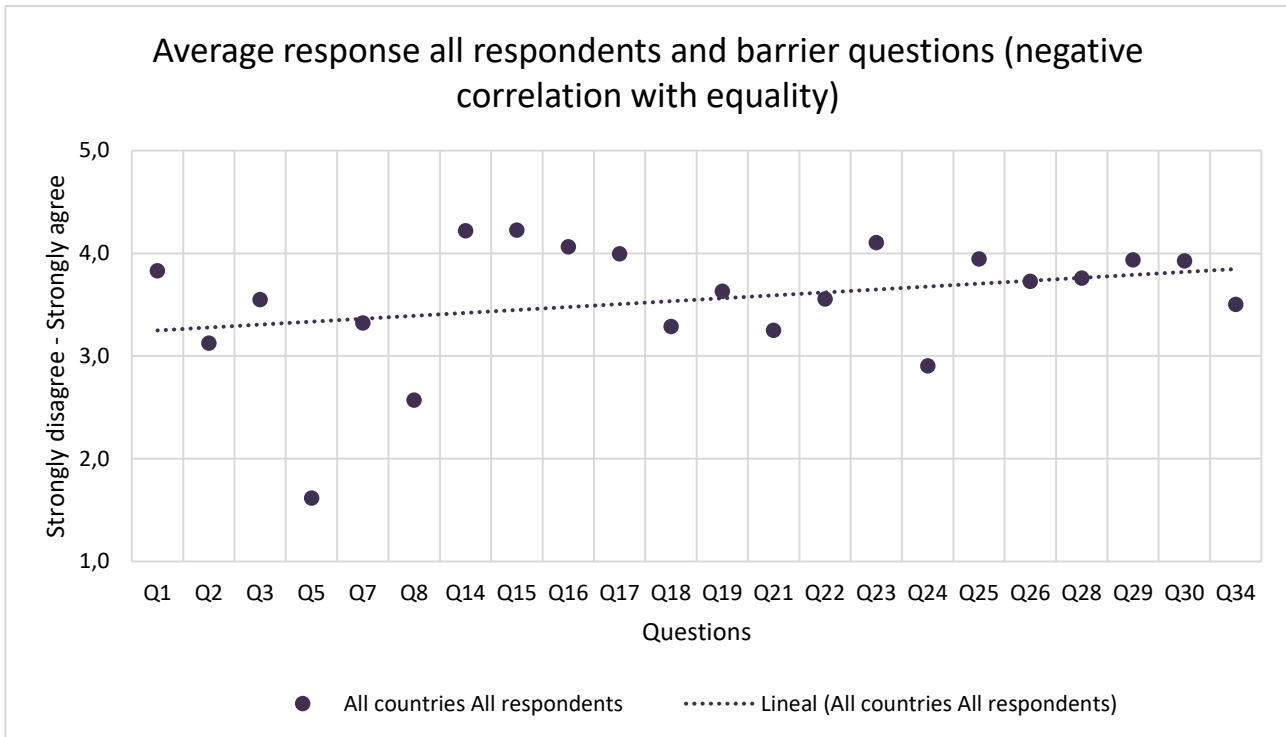
The strategies suggested (Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38) to increase the representation of women in leadership positions were highly rated by respondents, showing a strong consensus on the need for proactive measures.

Respondents strongly agree on strategies to increase the representation of women in leadership positions. These include encouraging women to pursue leadership roles from a young age (Q35: 4.3), implementing diversity and inclusion policies in the workplace and in politics (Q36: 4.4), providing mentorship and support for women in leadership positions (Q37: 4.3), and engaging in awareness-raising campaigns (Q38: 4.3).

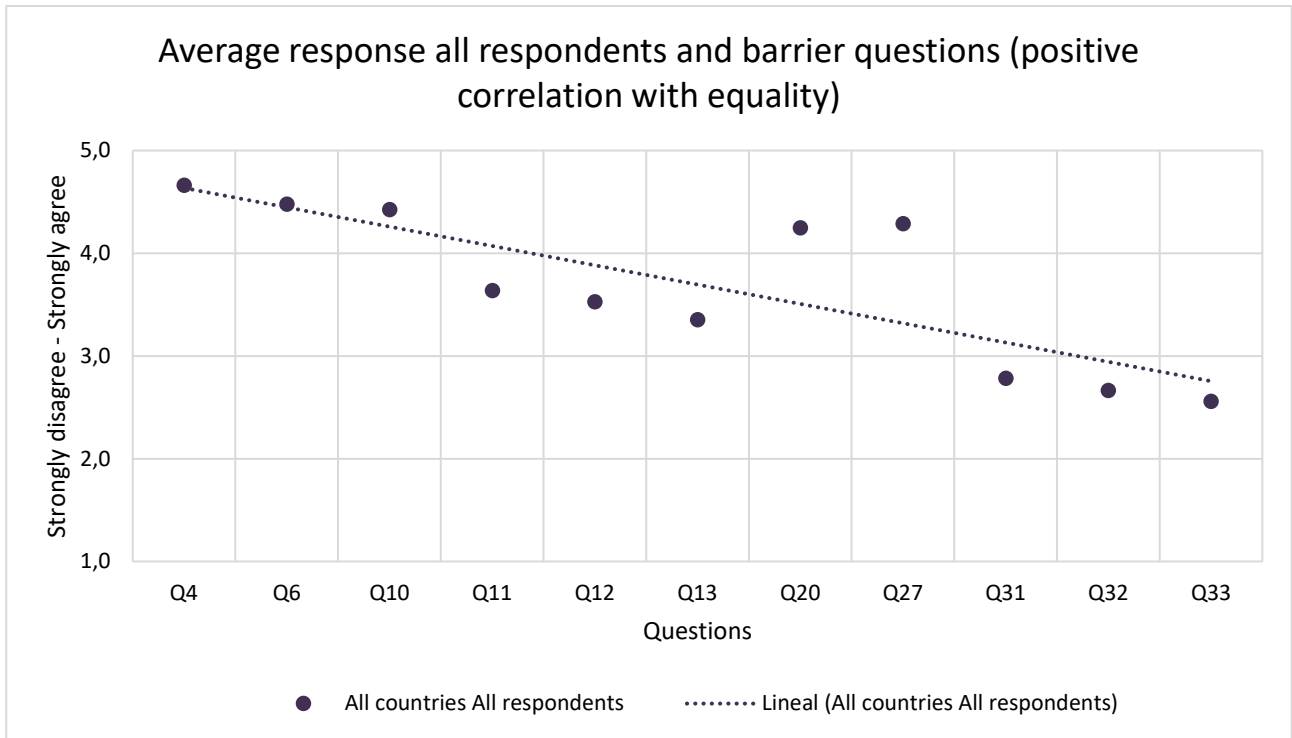
In summary, the survey shows recognition of the challenges and biases faced by women in politics, and a strong consensus on the need for diversity and actions to promote women's participation in leadership roles.

3.4. Results by demographic groups

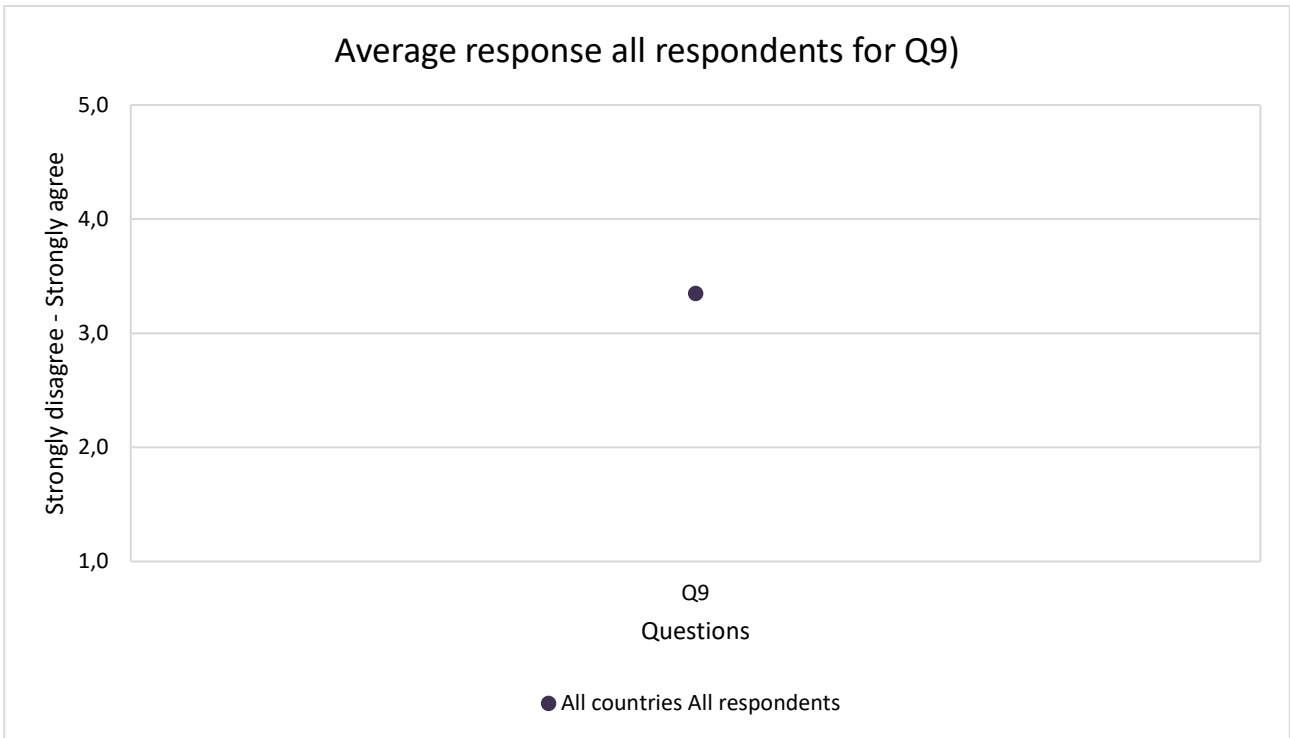
3.4.1. Interpretation of results for all respondents



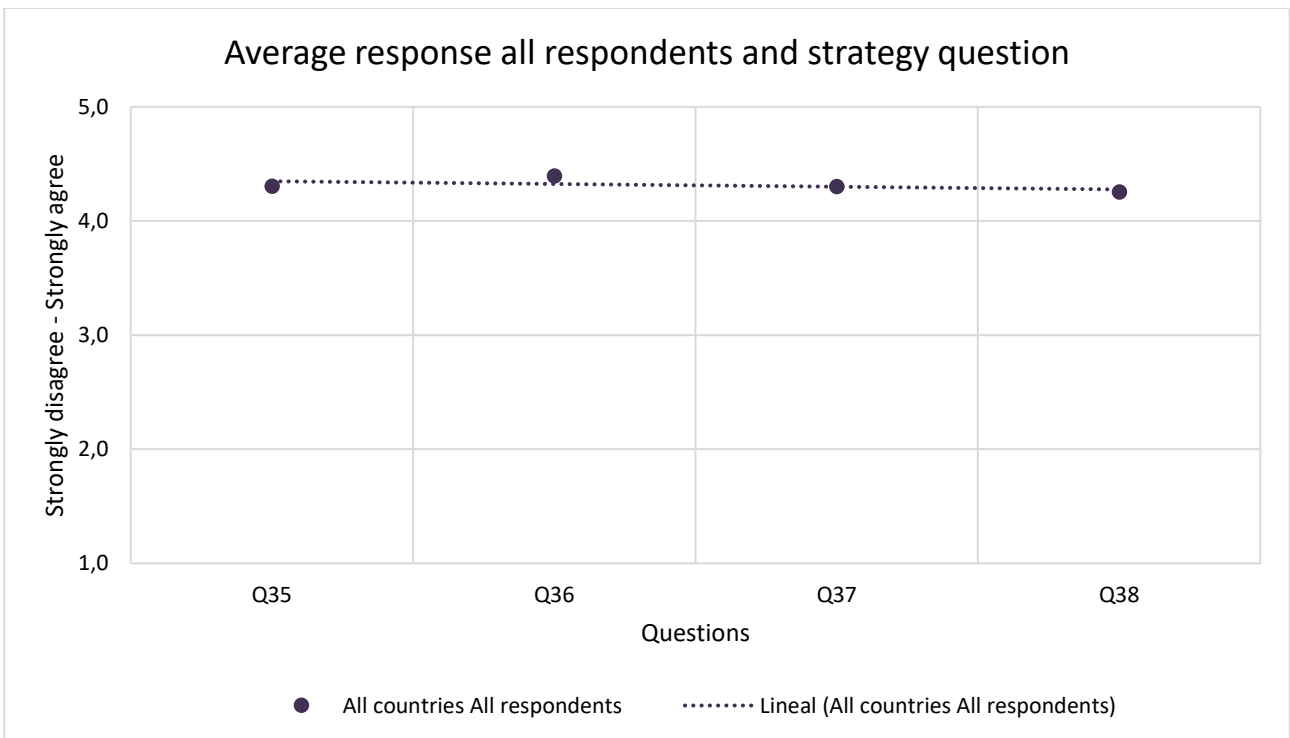
Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a negative correlation with equality (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q28, Q29, Q30, and Q34). The overall trend for these questions shows that respondents generally agree that there are significant barriers and biases that women face in politics, which tend to hinder gender equality. For example, the responses indicate that they agree or strongly agree (ratings 3.6 to 4.2) that stereotypes about women's abilities hinder their progress, women in politics are often judged more harshly for their appearance, and women are held to higher standards or face more scrutiny in leadership roles. On the other hand, respondents feel less strongly (2.6 to 2.9) about personal experiences of gender bias or discouragement due to gender. Notably, the perception that men candidates are usually better qualified is strongly disagreed with (1.6).



Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a positive correlation with equality (Q4, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q20, Q27, Q31, Q32, and Q33). The answers to these questions indicate a more positive perception of gender equality in politics. There's strong agreement (4.2 to 4.7) that women are as capable as men in political leadership roles, that diverse representation in leadership positions is important, and that the presence of more women in leadership positions would inspire other women. It also shows support for political organizations implementing family-friendly policies and promoting women to decision-making roles. However, there's uncertainty or disagreement (2.6 to 3.6) regarding the fair and accurate portrayal of women politicians by media, whether there are equal opportunities for women and men in leadership roles in the community, and whether cultural norms support women's participation in politics.



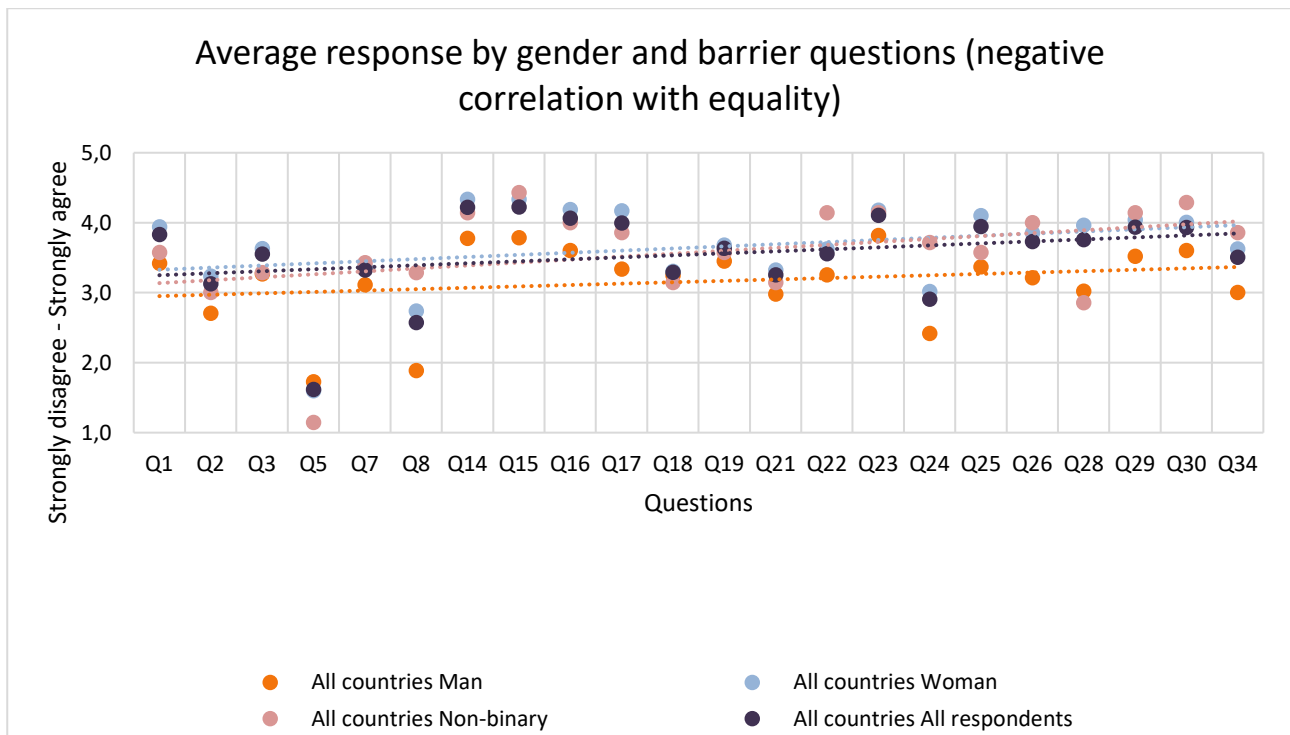
Respondents' answers to Q9. This question received an average response (3.3), which suggests that respondents are somewhat neutral or unsure about the idea that men and women have different leadership styles. This neutrality might indicate a perception of individual differences in leadership style beyond gender.



Respondents' answers to questions related to strategies (Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38). The respondents agreed or strongly agreed (4.3 to 4.4) with all the proposed strategies to increase women

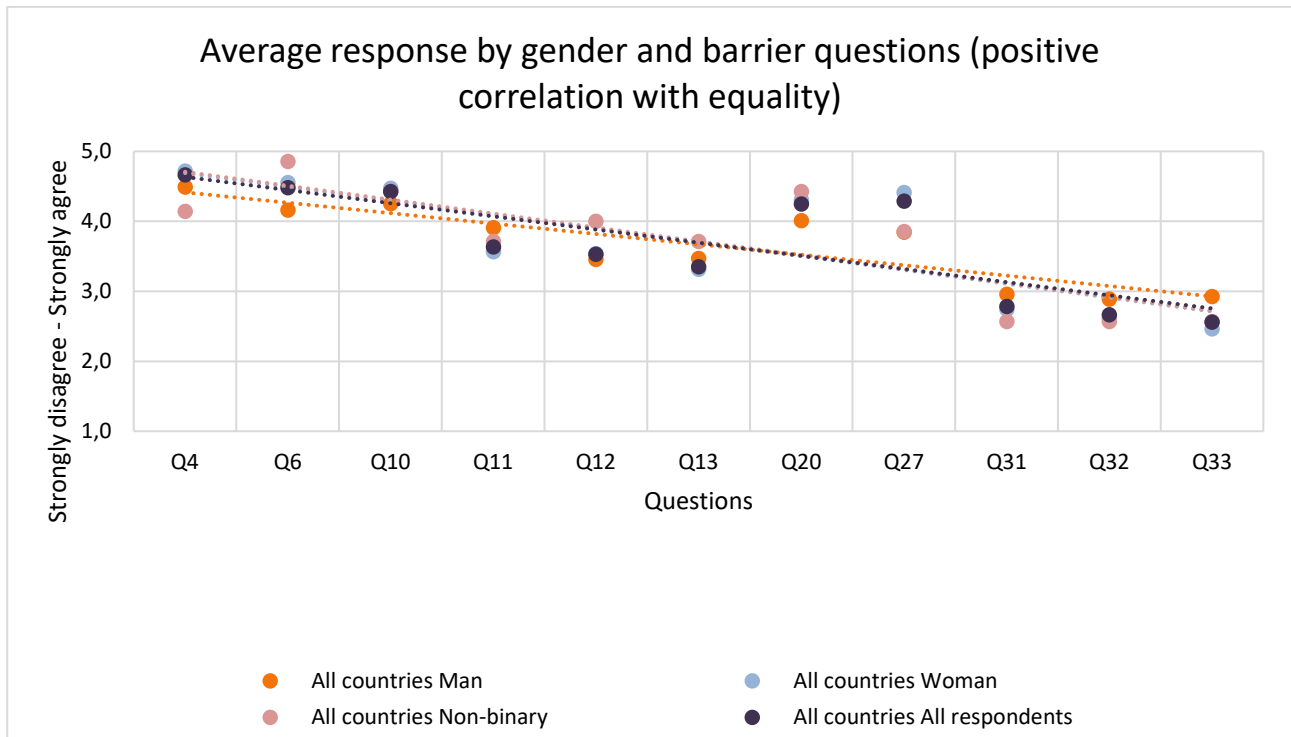
representation in leadership positions. This includes encouraging women to pursue leadership roles from a young age, implementing diversity and inclusion policies, providing mentorship and support for women in leadership positions, and engaging in awareness-raising campaigns. This strong support suggests that respondents believe these strategies could be effective in increasing gender equality in political leadership.

3.4.2. Interpretation of results by gender

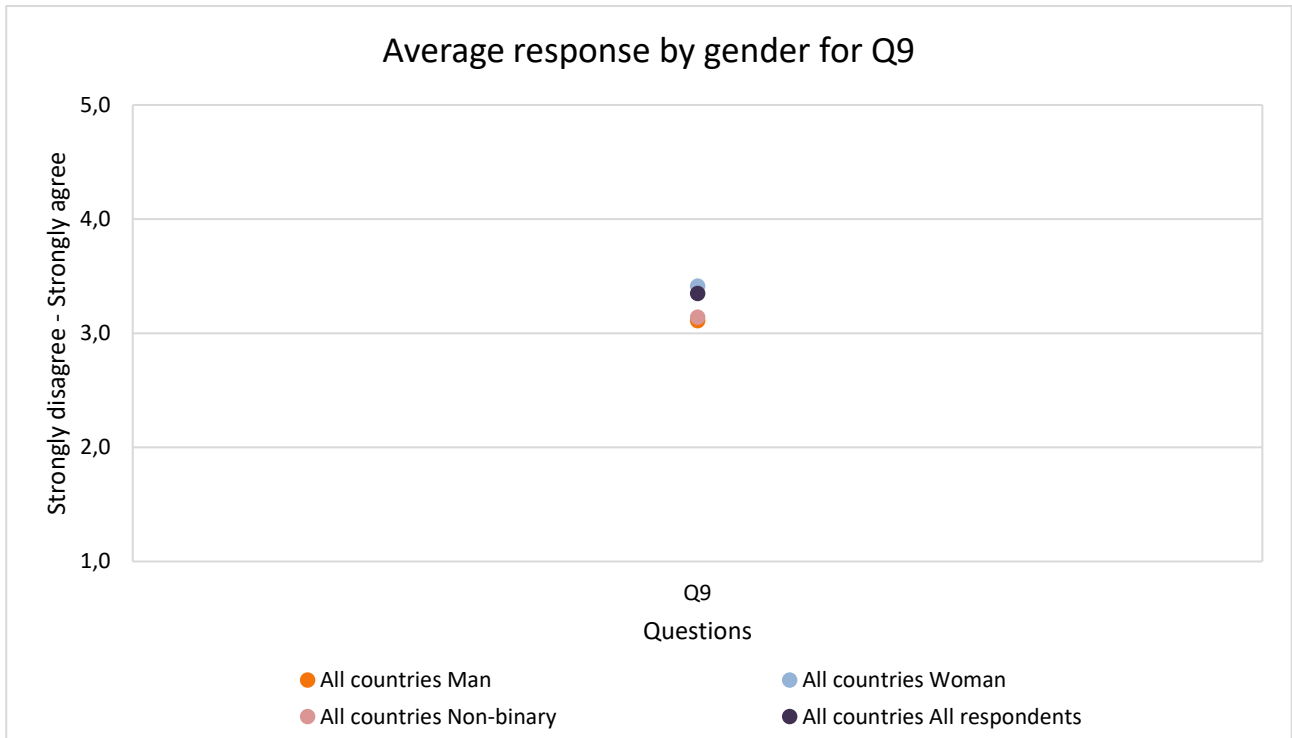


Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a negative correlation with equality (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q28, Q29, Q30, and Q34). Across these questions, women and non-binary respondents seemed to acknowledge the existence of gender biases and barriers more than men. For instance, for question Q1, regarding whether stereotypes about women's abilities hinder their progress in politics, women (3.9) and non-binary (3.6) respondents agreed more than men (3.4). This trend continued in Q2 and Q3, reflecting a higher awareness or experience of gender biases in politics among these groups. In question Q5, all groups mostly disagreed with the statement that men candidates are usually better qualified, but non-binary respondents disagreed more strongly (1.1) compared to women (1.6) and men (1.7). Interestingly, in questions relating to witnessing or experiencing gender bias (Q7, Q24), discrimination, or being discouraged from pursuing leadership due to gender (Q8), women and non-binary respondents scored higher, possibly indicating a higher exposure or sensitivity to these issues. Questions about the harsher judgment of women politicians on appearance and personal life

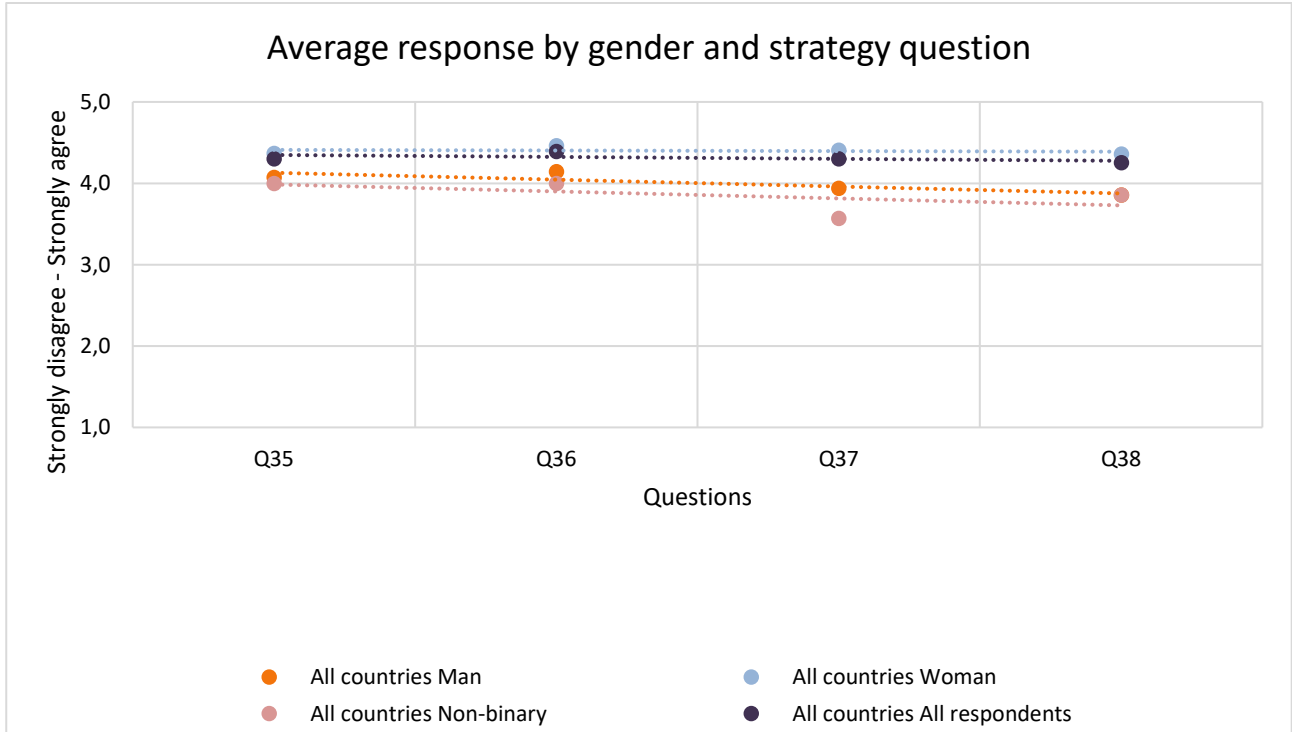
choices (Q14, Q15), revealed that women and non-binary respondents agreed more strongly than men. This trend suggests a greater awareness or experience of double standards and scrutiny in politics among women and non-binary respondents.



Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a positive correlation with equality (Q4, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q20, Q27, Q31, Q32, and Q33). For these questions, there was a general consensus among all groups regarding the importance of equality in politics, with women and non-binary respondents generally showing a stronger agreement. For instance, question Q4, affirming that women are as capable as men in political leadership roles, received high scores from all groups (4.5 for men, 4.7 for women, and 4.1 for non-binary). The consensus extended to Q6 about the importance of diverse representation, with non-binary respondents (4.9) agreeing the most, followed by women (4.6) and men (4.2). However, there was less agreement on whether the respondents could easily identify women political role models in their countries (Q11), with men (3.9) agreeing more so than women (3.6) and non-binary (3.7) respondents. Questions about work-life balance (Q20) and promotion of women to decision-making roles (Q27) garnered higher agreement from non-binary and women respondents, emphasizing their recognition of the importance of structural support for women in politics.



Respondents' answers to Q9. The responses to Q9, stating that men and women have different leadership styles, were quite balanced across all gender groups, indicating a broad consensus on the perception of gender differences in leadership styles.



Respondents' answers to questions related to strategies (Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38). All respondents agreed quite strongly on strategies to overcome gender inequality in politics, with women tending to agree slightly more than men, and non-binary respondents' scores falling in between. The highest

overall agreement was on implementing diversity and inclusion policies (Q36) and providing mentorship and support for women in leadership positions (Q37).

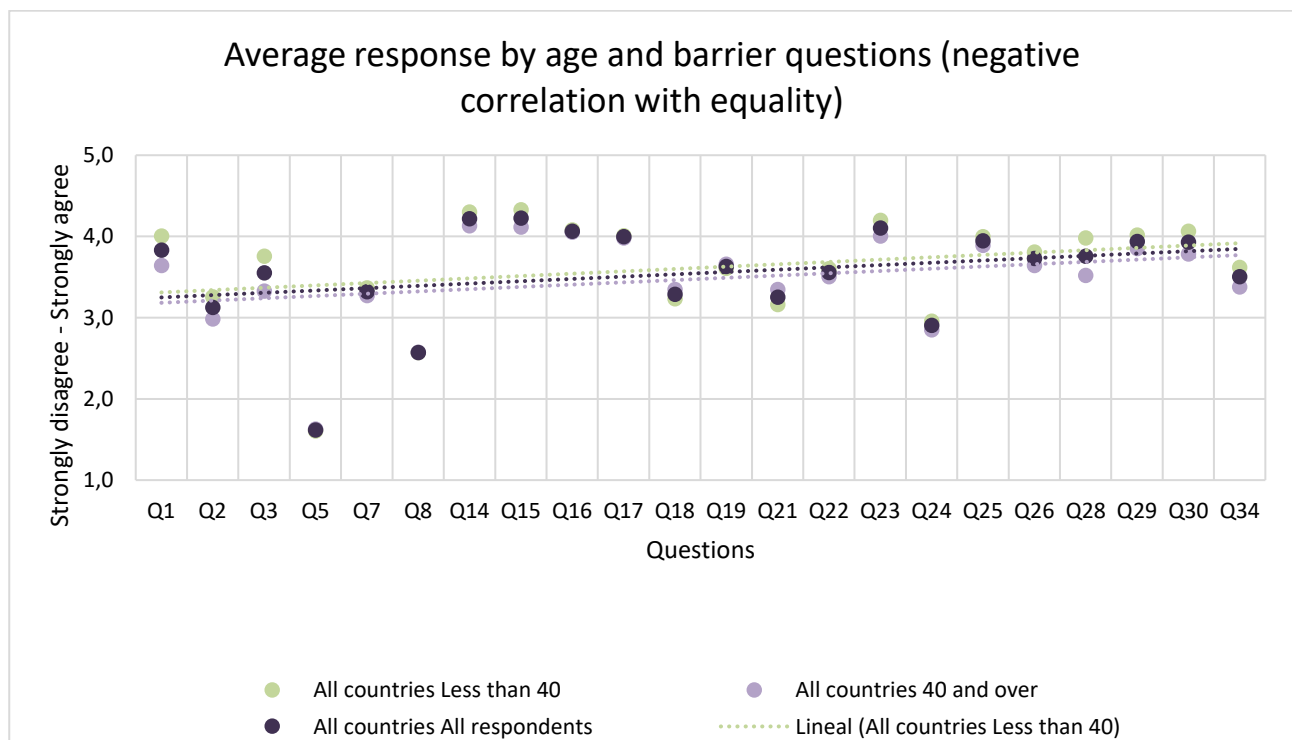
Overall difference in responses by gender

The data suggests a difference in perception and experience of gender equality in politics among different gender groups. Women and non-binary respondents tend to acknowledge the existence of gender biases and barriers more significantly than men, potentially due to their direct experiences or greater sensitivity to these issues.

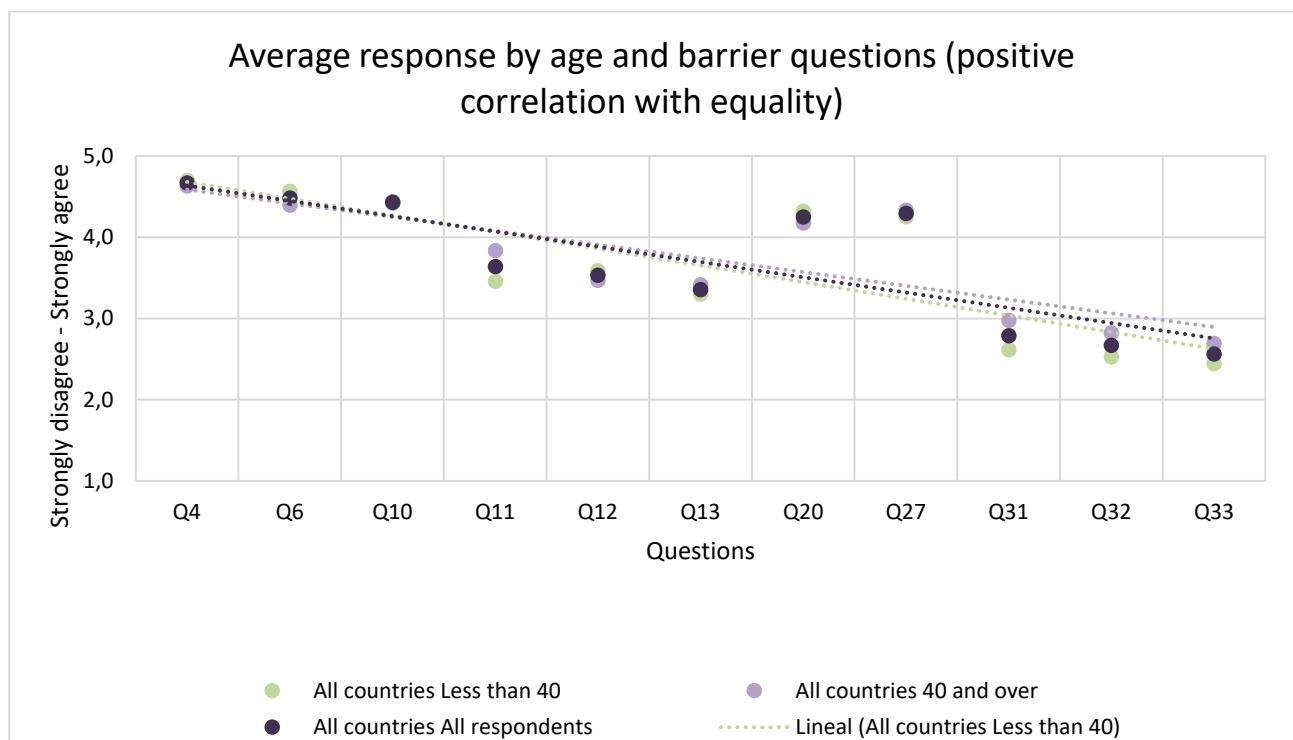
While men respondents generally agreed with the existence of biases and the need for change, their agreement was often less strong than women and non-binary respondents, possibly due to lower awareness or exposure to these issues.

All groups agreed on the strategies necessary to overcome these barriers, indicating a collective understanding and acceptance of the need for active measures to promote gender equality in political leadership.

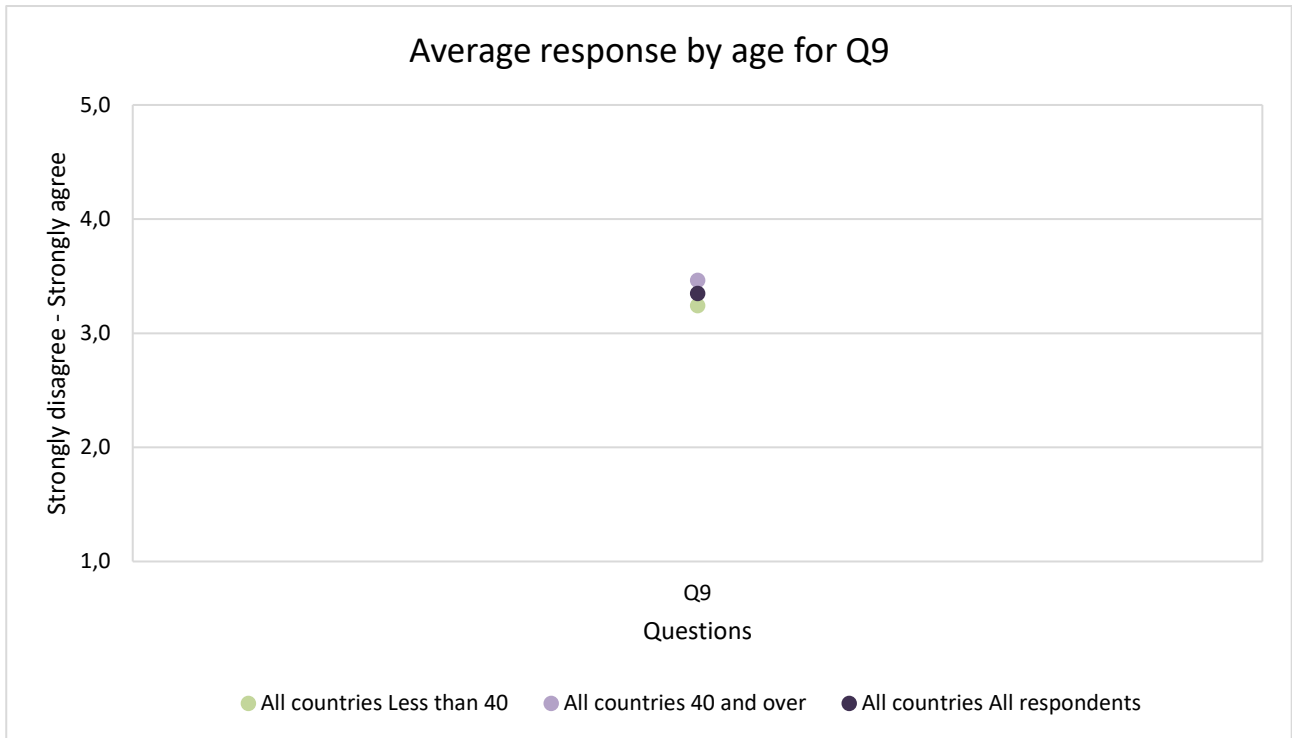
3.4.3. Interpretation of results by age



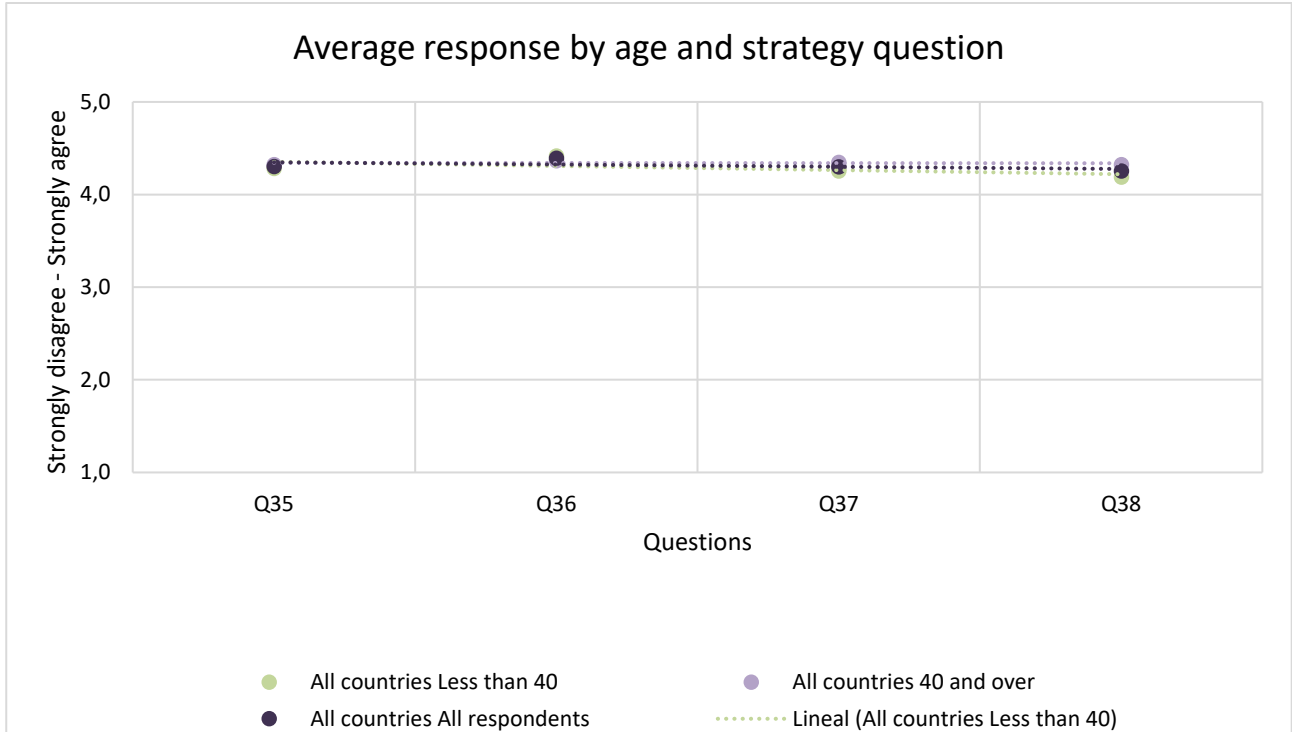
Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a negative correlation with equality (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q28, Q29, Q30, and Q34). Respondents below 40 years old generally agreed more strongly with the barrier-related questions with a negative correlation with equality, implying a stronger recognition of the challenges and biases that women face in politics. They displayed a stronger belief in the existence of stereotypes hindering women's progress (Q1, Q2, Q3), perceived women politicians as being judged more harshly (Q14, Q15, Q16), and acknowledged more workplace challenges for women (Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26). This group was also more aware of societal norms and expectations that limit women's opportunities (Q28, Q29, Q30), and they noticed media bias more frequently (Q34).



Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a positive correlation with equality (Q4, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q20, Q27, Q31, Q32, and Q33). Both age groups strongly agreed that women are as capable as men in political leadership roles (Q4), that diverse representation is important (Q6), and that more women in leadership positions would inspire others (Q10). They also supported the idea of political organizations implementing family-friendly policies (Q20) and promoting women to decision-making roles (Q27). However, respondents 40 years and older identified women political role models more easily (Q11) and slightly more often perceived equal opportunities for men and women in leadership roles (Q32) and a fairer media portrayal of women politicians (Q33).



Respondents' answers to Q9. Both groups were somewhat neutral to the statement that men and women have different leadership styles (Q9), although respondents over 40 years old tended to agree slightly more.



Respondents' answers to questions related to strategies (Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38). Respondents from both age groups strongly agreed with all strategies proposed to increase the representation of women in leadership positions. They believe in encouraging women from a young age (Q35),

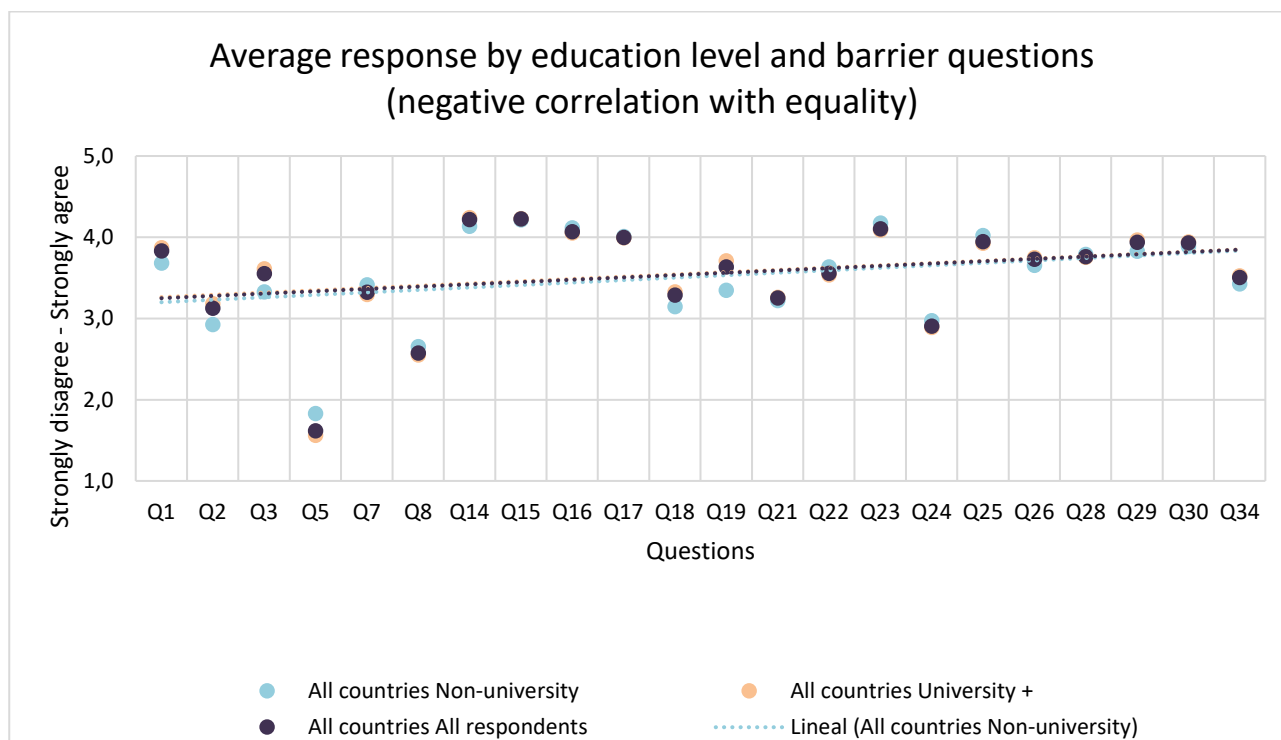
implementing diversity policies (Q36), providing mentorship and support (Q37), and engaging in awareness-raising campaigns (Q38). The support for these strategies was uniformly high among all respondents.

Overall difference in responses by age

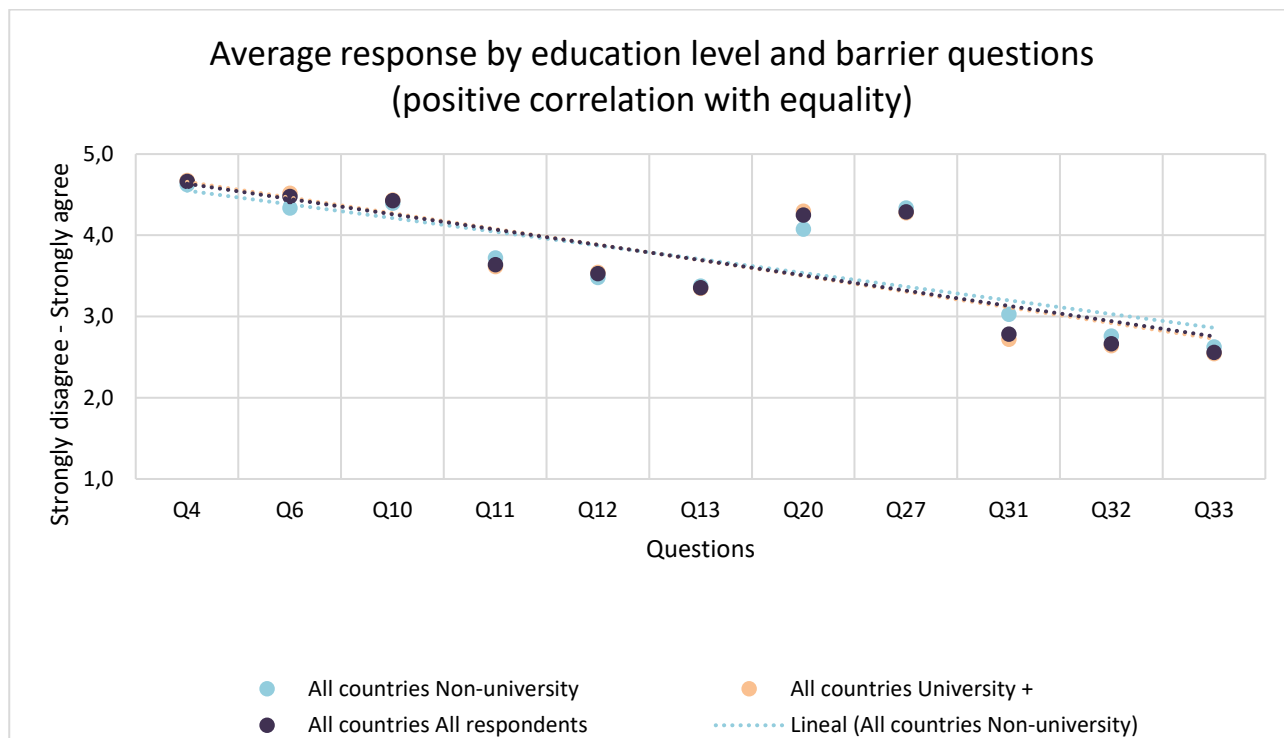
The younger age group (below 40) appeared more aware of the existing barriers and biases faced by women in politics. They were generally more critical of the status quo and seemed more attuned to inequalities and issues around gender representation in politics. They also reported a stronger belief in the presence of gender biases, stereotypes, and challenges that women face.

The older group (40 and over), while generally agreeing with the existence of gender biases and the need for change, had slightly lower agreement rates on many questions, indicating somewhat less recognition of these barriers. However, they still acknowledged the importance of diverse representation, the need for family-friendly policies, and the idea that women are as capable as men in political leadership.

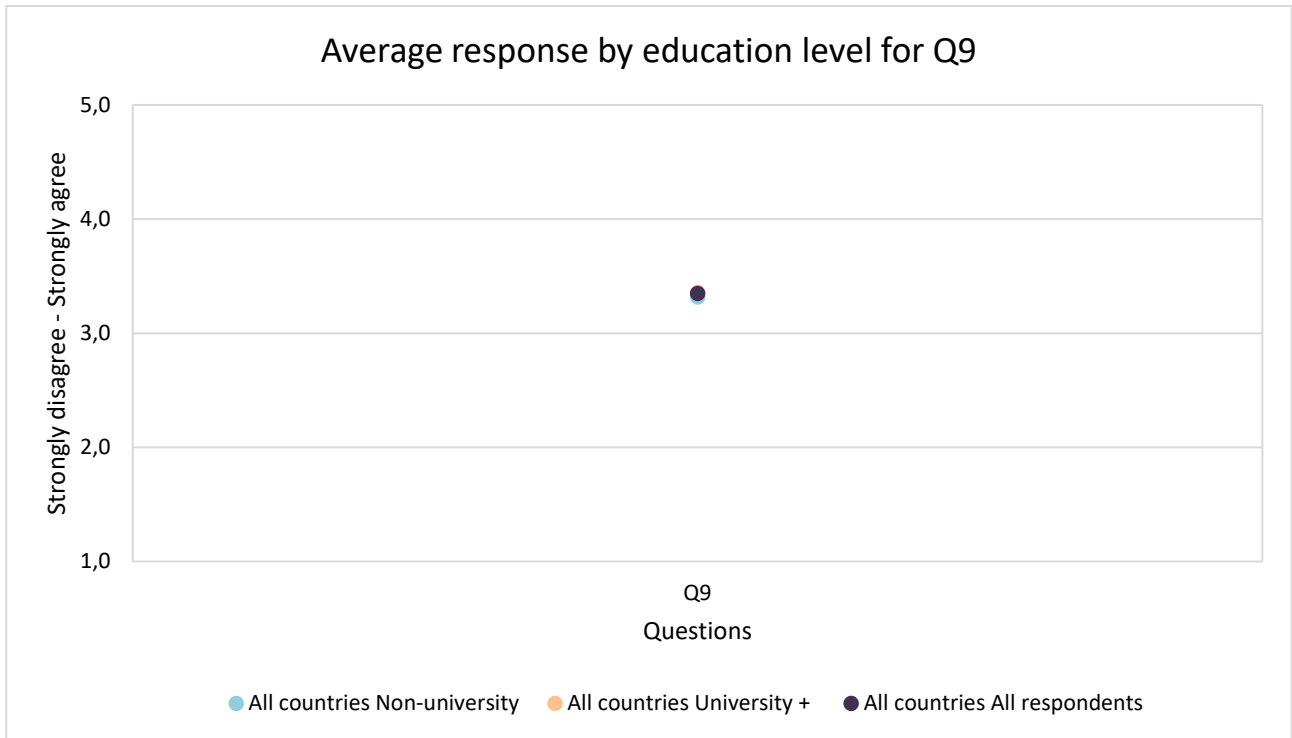
3.4.4. Interpretation of results by educational level



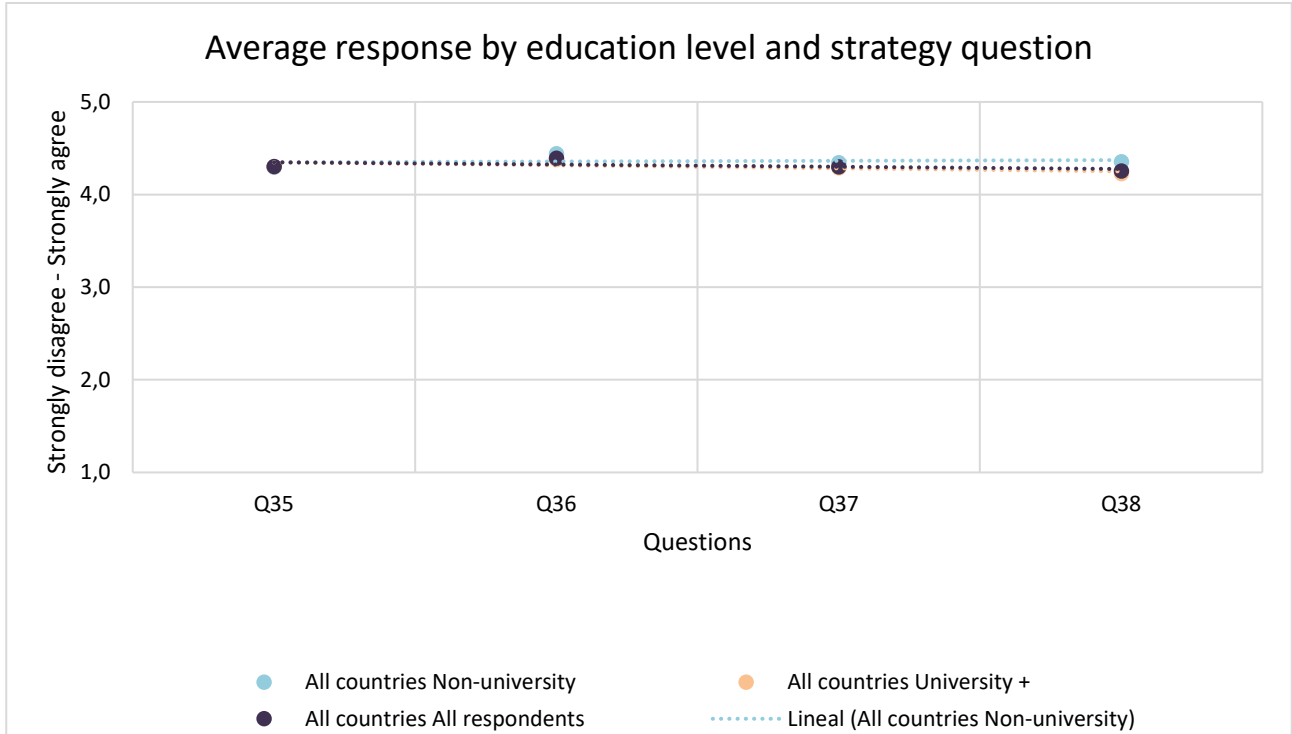
Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a negative correlation with equality (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q28, Q29, Q30, and Q34). Both groups generally agreed on the existence of gender-related barriers in politics. The university-educated group scored higher on Q1 (stereotypes about women's abilities), Q2 (women perceived as emotional), Q3 (women needing to downplay femininity), Q19 (women's work-life balance), and Q29 (societal norms limit women's political aspirations). These results suggest that university-educated respondents were more aware of gender bias, stereotypes, and inequalities faced by women in politics.



Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a positive correlation with equality (Q4, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q20, Q27, Q31, Q32, and Q33). Both groups generally agreed on the positive aspects of gender equality, such as women's capability in political roles (Q4) and the importance of diverse representation (Q6). There was slightly more agreement among university-educated respondents on the need for family-friendly policies to support women's participation in politics (Q20). However, this group also perceived less support for women in politics from cultural norms (Q31), fewer equal opportunities in leadership roles (Q32), and less fair and accurate portrayal of women politicians by the media (Q33).



Respondents' answers to Q9. (Men and women have different leadership styles) Both groups generally agreed that men and women have different leadership styles, with a slightly higher agreement among the university-educated respondents.



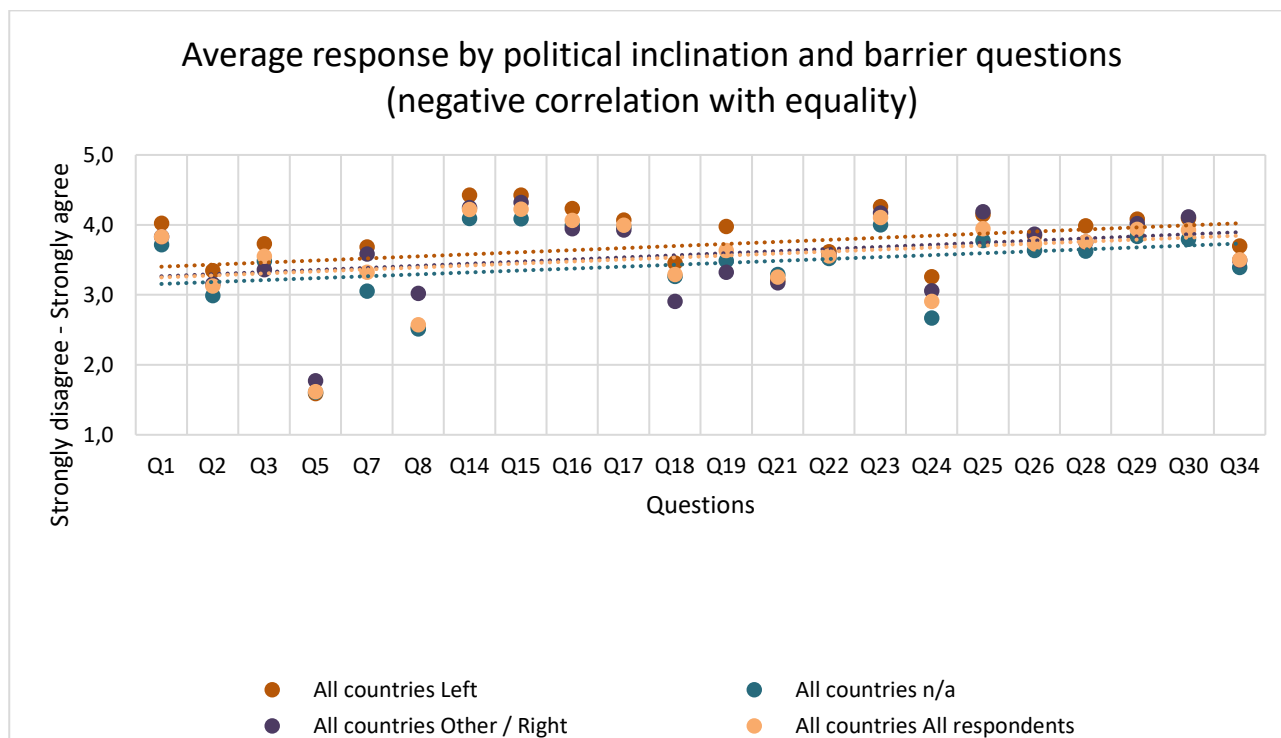
Respondents' answers to questions related to strategies (Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38). There was strong agreement across both groups on the need for strategies to overcome inequality. Both groups agreed equally on encouraging women to pursue leadership roles from a young age (Q35),

implementing diversity and inclusion policies (Q36), and providing mentorship and support for women in leadership positions (Q37). The non-university educated respondents agreed slightly more on the importance of awareness-raising campaigns (Q38).

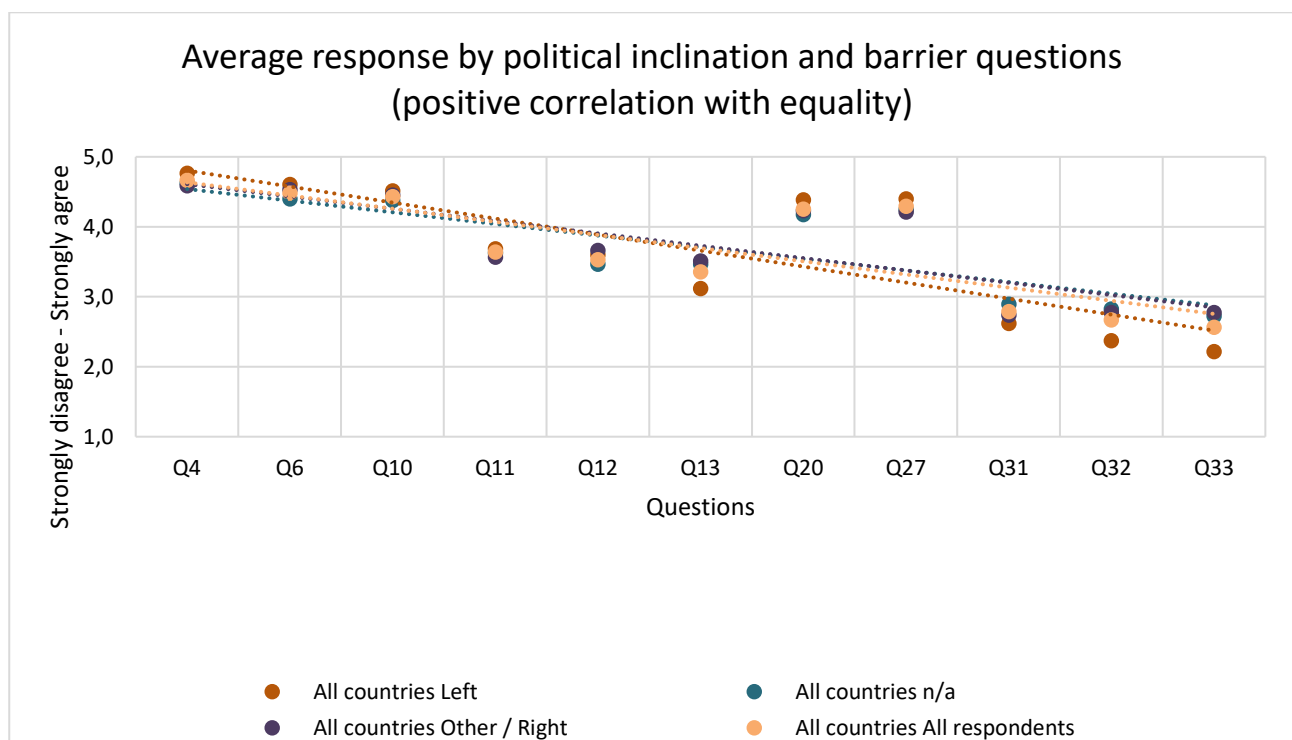
Overall difference in responses by educational level

In general, university-educated respondents tended to recognize the challenges faced by women in politics more than non-university educated respondents. They had a greater awareness of gender biases, stereotypes, and inequalities, but also saw less support for women's participation in politics from cultural norms and the media. They agreed more on the need for family-friendly policies to support women's participation in politics. However, both groups had similar views on strategies to overcome inequality.

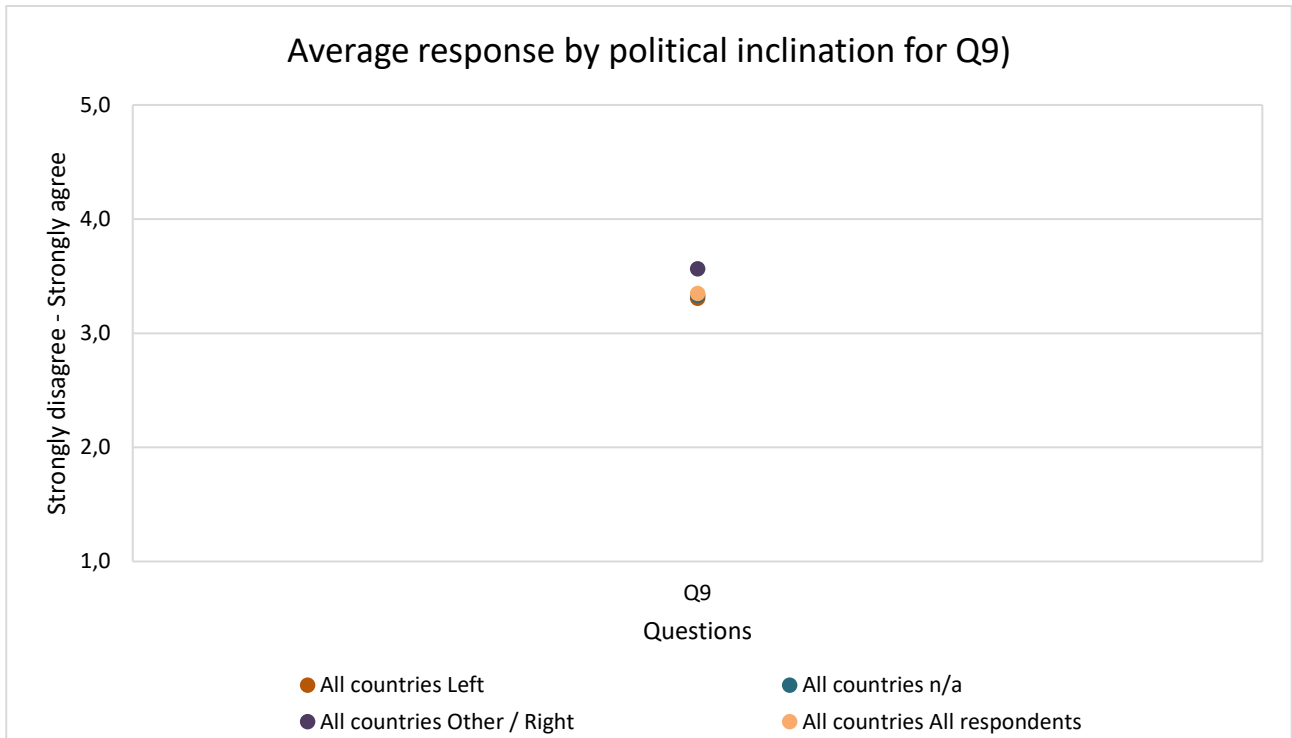
3.4.5. Interpretation of results by political inclination



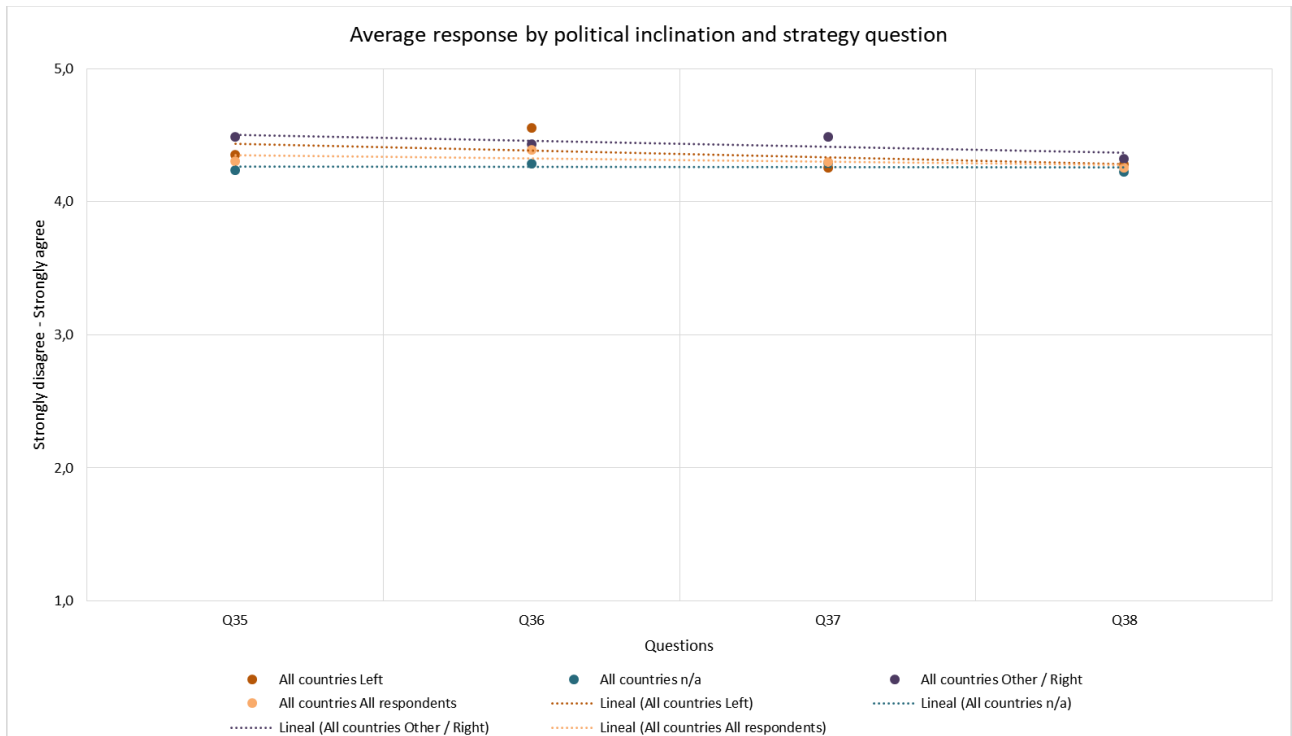
Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a negative correlation with equality (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q8, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q28, Q29, Q30, and Q34). Overall, respondents who identified as Left-leaning (Left) tended to agree more strongly with statements highlighting the barriers to gender equality in politics. Their average scores were consistently higher than those of the Other/Right and non-disclosure (n/a) groups across all these questions. This suggests that Left-leaning respondents may be more aware or more readily acknowledge gender bias, discrimination, and double standards in politics and leadership positions. On the other hand, respondents who did not disclose their political affiliation (n/a) or identified as Other/Right tended to agree less strongly or were more unsure about these statements. Their scores were generally lower than those of the Left-leaning group. This may suggest that these groups perceive fewer barriers or are less aware of the gender biases and stereotypes faced by women in politics.



Respondents' answers to barrier-related questions with a positive correlation with equality (Q4, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q20, Q27, Q31, Q32, and Q33). Across all groups, the responses to positively correlated questions were generally high, suggesting an overall agreement with statements that support or affirm women's capacity, roles, and importance in politics and leadership. The Left-leaning group again demonstrated the highest average scores, indicating a more explicit recognition and acceptance of women's capabilities and the importance of diverse representation.



Respondents' answers to Q9. For Q9, which posits that men and women have different leadership styles, all three groups provided similar scores, indicating a slight general agreement with this perception across the political spectrum. Other/Right respondents agree slightly more about the difference in leadership styles.



Respondents' answers to questions related to strategies (Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38). For these questions, all groups demonstrated a high level of agreement, which suggests a broad acceptance

of the need for strategies to increase women's representation in leadership positions. Left-leaning respondents exhibited slightly higher scores, showing a somewhat stronger endorsement of these strategies.

Overall difference in responses by political inclination

Overall, there appears to be a slight skew based on political affiliation. Left-leaning respondents generally agreed more strongly with the statements in the survey, both those highlighting barriers to gender equality and those affirming the capabilities of women in leadership roles. This may suggest a greater awareness or acceptance of gender bias issues and the need for change within this group.

The Other/Right and n/a groups demonstrated less agreement with the negative correlation questions, indicating a potential less awareness or acceptance of the barriers faced by women in politics. However, they still demonstrated a high level of agreement with the positive correlation questions and strategies for change, indicating that they also see value in gender equality and diversity in leadership roles.

In conclusion, while there are some differences between the groups, the data indicates a shared recognition across the political spectrum of the need for gender equality and the importance of diverse representation in political leadership. The level of acknowledgement of the barriers and biases women face in politics, however, does appear to vary based on political affiliation.

4. National reports

The National Reports compiled for the FEM-ABLE project provide an extensive examination of the state of women's political participation in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. Each report delves into the unique political and social contexts of the respective nations, presenting an overview of the environment within which women operate in politics.

These reports have been meticulously structured to cover the following sections:

- **National Context:** Each report opens with a brief overview of the political and social landscape of the respective countries. This provides context for understanding the challenges and opportunities that women face in their political pursuits within these specific environments.
- **Historical Background:** This section sheds light on the historical journey of women's political participation, tracing its development from early times to the present. It reveals the evolution of women's roles in political and power positions over time.
- **Current Statistics:** A comprehensive presentation of contemporary data on women's political participation in the respective countries is provided. This includes the proportion of women in politics, the positions they occupy, and where possible the trends over time.
- **Results of the Focus Groups:** Focus groups were conducted with women who have experience in political and leadership positions. These discussions aimed to validate existing barriers hindering women's participation in politics and leadership, identify additional challenges, and establish effective strategies to overcome these hurdles. Barriers such as gender bias, stereotyping, lack of role models, double standards, work-life balance, systemic barriers like the glass ceiling, wage gap, and traditionally assigned roles to women in political organizations were explored.
- **Results of the Questionnaires:** The reports also detail the findings from questionnaires that were administered to understand voters' perceptions of women's political participation and leadership. These questionnaires included an extensive range of questions, evaluating respondents' attitudes towards gender bias, role models, work-life balance, and potential strategies to enhance female representation. The questionnaires

were administered on a scale of 1 to 5, allowing respondents to express the degree of their agreement or disagreement with each statement.

- **Summary of Key Findings and National-Specific Recommendations:** Each report concludes with a summary of the most important insights uncovered during the research and offers recommendations tailored to the specific national context to enhance women's participation in politics.
- **References:** A list of all sources referred to during the research, lending credibility and traceability to the information presented in the report.

These comprehensive national reports serve as a roadmap to understanding the multi-faceted issues that influence women's participation in politics and leadership in each of the countries studied, offering insights that are invaluable in the pursuit of gender equality in politics.

5. Collection of good practices

Our Collection of Good Practices is a carefully curated compilation of exemplary strategies for enhancing women's political participation. Each contributing partner from the countries of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden, along with other regions, has selected 2-3 practices that best embody our selection guidelines, which place an emphasis on relevance, effectiveness, transferability, sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity.

These practices range from comprehensive legislation, transformative programs, innovative projects, to grassroots citizen initiatives. We cover a multitude of territorial contexts and structures including rural, urban, regional, local, and national. By showcasing a broad spectrum of practical solutions, we aim to encourage the adoption of these practices in different contexts to further the cause of gender equality in politics.

To ensure a structured and comprehensive understanding of each practice, we have followed a standardized template for practice description and analysis, which includes:

- **Country/Region:** Details of the geographical location where the practice has been implemented.
- **Objective:** A clear articulation of the specific gender-related challenge addressed by the practice or the goal it achieves in terms of women's political representation.
- **Target group:** Identification of the direct beneficiaries of the practice, such as women politicians, political parties, or the wider public.
- **Implementation:** A narrative of the practice's key activities, execution methods, involved parties, and any established partnerships or collaborations.
- **Results/Impact:** A portrayal of the tangible and intangible outcomes or impact, substantiated by quantitative or qualitative evidence demonstrating its effectiveness.
- **Lessons learned:** Important insights or recommendations based on the implementation experience, which could guide those wishing to replicate or adapt the practice.
- **Transferability:** An appraisal of the practice's adaptability potential within different European settings, taking into consideration diverse cultural, social, and political factors.
- **Resources/Support:** A breakdown of resources needed for implementation, such as funding, staff, or technical skills, and information on any available support for those planning to adopt or adapt the practice.

- **Contact information:** Relevant contact details for the organization or person behind the practice, encouraging further discussion, information exchange, or collaboration.

Through this Collection of Good Practices, FEM-ABLE is committed to disseminating valuable lessons and effective methods, ultimately facilitating a landscape where women's political participation and gender equality are the norm, not the exception.

6. References

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UN Women. Home page. <https://www.unwomen.org/en>

Women Political Leaders. Home page. <https://www.womenpoliticalleaders.org/>

7. List of annexes

- 7.1. National report for Cyprus
- 7.2. National report for Greece
- 7.3. National report for Italy
- 7.4. National report for Lithuania
- 7.5. National report for Portugal
- 7.6. National report for Spain
- 7.7. National report for Sweden
- 7.8. Collection of good practices