

Short biography notes

Conference: New Challenges for Gender Equality in Europe

Barbara Schwarz

Minister for Education, Social and Family Affairs of the Government of Lower Austria, President of the think tank "European Forum Wachau". Business economist by profession, former mayor of the city Dürnstein, member of the Lower Austrian Government since 2011.

Maria Rigler

Coordinator of the Strategic Partnership Project GenderStrat4Equality. Working in the Lower Austrian Government Office since more than 30 years, Maria Rigler's expertise covers a broad range of gender equality issues like reconciliation between work, family and private life, fathers on paternity leave, mentoring for women in decision making and motivating women into politics. She is also an active member of the city council of her hometown in Lower Austria.

Keynote Speakers

Kristín Ástgeirsdóttir

Director of the Icelandic Centre for Gender Equality in Akureyri since 2007. The Centre is a government agency under the Ministry for Welfare. Before that Ms Ástgeirsdóttir was a researcher and deputy director for the Centre for Women's and Gender Research at the University of Iceland. She was a Member of Parliament for the Women's Alliance until 1999. In 2000 she has worked as a project manager for UNIFEM in Kosovo. A historian by education she has written numerous articles on the history of the women's movements in Iceland. She was one of three members of the Icelandic Parliament's Special Investigation Committee on the collapse of the banking sector in Iceland, a committee which dealt with the ethical side of the collapse.

Tamara Šterk

Psychologist who works as an advisor at the Office for Gender Equality, Government of the Republic of Croatia. She is a trainer, project manager, evaluator and expert on strategic planning as well as a member of the national Supervisory Board for implementation of the European Social Fund ESF. She has been an active member of civil society organisations in the area of women's empowerment and democratisation.

Svanhvít Aðalsteinsdóttir

Senior Advisor to NATO's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security in Brussels. Her professional education includes a Bachelor of Science in export marketing and studies of international relations.

Vera Jauk

PhD, managing director of the Interministerial Working Group for Gender Mainstreaming in Austria since it was established in 2000 to implement Gender Mainstreaming at the federal level. A lawyer by education, Ms Jauk has been Head of Department on Gender Equality Policies and Legal Matters within the Federal Chancellery Division on Women and Gender Equality since 1999. She regularly conducts gender trainings at university and post academic level and has published various articles on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. Besides the board of the European Institute for Gender Equality she was also member of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming.

Panellists and Experts

In order of appearance

Wolfgang Traußnig

Privy councillor, PhD, leading the EuropeDirect Information Office of the Government of Lower Austria, the place where citizens can pick up free information materials such as brochures on various EU policy areas, consult official EU documents and also find expert advice on sundry EU matters. In addition, events and seminars are also staged on a wide range of topics relating to European integration.



Lenka Formánková

Researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences in the Czech Republic. Holding a Ph.D. in Social Policy Analysis and a M.A. in Psychology. She is primarily interested in social and public policy analysis from a gender perspective, strategies of work/life reconciliation, new forms of intimate life, and migration, which she researches using quantitative and qualitative (biographic and narrative) research methods. Since 2015 she has been a member of the Expert Committee for Family Policy at the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Member of Taos Institute, which promotes theories of social constructionism in research and practice. Co-Author of the European Study “Gender and Decision Making, Social and Economic Enterprises and Gender Opportunities” in 2016.

Maria Ludociva Bottarelli Tranquilli-Leali

Representative of the European Women’s Lobby in Italy. PH degree in Political Sciences, project manager, senior expert, trainer for EU, gender and social issues. President of Lef-Italia, member of Committee of Honor of the prize “Immagini Amiche”, member of the Italian Committee of the “Price Women of Europe”. Decorated by receiving the award of Officer of Merit of the Italian Republic. Treasurer of the nonprofit association Slaves no More, Rome. International Observer to parliamentary and presidential elections of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Professional teaching and lecturing experiences include also the regions of Kazakhstan, Russia and China.

Margarita Jankauskaitė

Project manager, holding a PhD in Humanities, professional experiences in working in women’s NGOs. Expertise in the field of gender equality, policies, gender representation in mass culture and gender based violence, developing projects on gender mainstreaming in local and central government, men in gender equality, education, reconciliation of family and working life. Training experience includes teaching in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Georgia and Turkey; she also worked as the UNDP gender expert and trainer in Ukraine. Elected as Ambassador for Diversity Against Discrimination in Lithuania, awarded in 2011 by the US embassy with the award of Women of Courage. In 2012, Margarita was selected by the European Institute for Gender Equality as one of 12 female figures in the ‘Women Inspiring Europe’ calendar. In 2015 she was awarded by the National Forum of Equality and Diversity for achievements in the field of Gender Equality.

Harald Bachhofer

MPA MBA, Managing Director of the Community Management Academy Lower Austria. Trainer and lecturer, chairman of examination committees and study commissions.

Lillemor Harnell

Responsible for competence development and training in Gender equality, quality assurance and improvement at SALAR. She has extensive experience in quality management, processes and project management in both local governments’ and the private sector.

Birgitta Andersson

Senior adviser at the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. Training expert of SALAR, providing training for gender equality and diversity issues. Responsible for supporting policy and employees of the covenant with SALAR’s plan for Gender Mainstreaming. Birgitta has 25 years’ experience of working with gender and equality, with a special focus on community planning. She has experience in both research and teaching, of evaluation and of training and guidance.

Christine Rosenbach

Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and Deputy of the Gender Mainstreaming Task Force of the Government of Lower Austria.

Sabine Hilbert

Responsible for the support of the Gender Mainstreaming task force with the Lower Austrian Provincial Government; especially for the implementation of Gender Budgeting. She has experience in communication campaigns (awareness raising, public relations), gender trainings and gender projects in the sector of provincial governments.



Heidemarie Wünsche-Pietzka

Director of institut dialog transnational, Chemnitz/Berlin. PhD, Lawyer, specialist for international law, development of educational projects, international cooperation, Gender Mainstreaming, organisational development and consultancy. Senior advisor on mainstreaming of gender equality in EU countries. Training of trainers in methodical competencies, facilitator and training of facilitators in DUO-method and for the process of dialogue in intercultural and inter-religious context. President of European Network for Dialogue Facilitation.

Maja Gergorić

Ms Gergorić holds a masters degree in Gender Studies and Political Science. She is currently working at the feminist organisation CESI Center for Education, Counseling and Research in Zagreb, Croatia, where she is the programme coordinator of the political processes and social activism.

Jasminka Pešut

Graduated in Sociology at the University of Zagreb. Since 1997 she has been affiliated with the Centre for Women's Studies, NGO from Croatia through research activities and educational programmes. Her expertise includes design, management and evaluation of projects with a focus on gender equality. Her previous experience includes participating in the process of creating gender equality policies and trainings for women in gender equality and education of children and youth through cultural activities.

Vilana Pilinkaitė Sotirovič

has more than ten years of experience in the area of women's rights issues and gender equality, an advanced degree in the field of humanities, and ample experience doing research, expert analysis and trainings. Through implementation of national and international projects she conducted trainings on mainstreaming gender equality in municipalities, governmental structures and organisations, capacity building of women leadership and mainstreaming diversity in education.

Augustas Čičelis

M.A. degrees in gender studies and social work, human rights activist, equality expert and project coordinator at the Center for Equality Advancement in Vilnius, Lithuania. He also works in the Association In Corpore, coordinating Vilnius LGBT* festival, the platform isgirsti.lt and other initiatives in the field of LGBT culture and emotional well-being. Besides, Augustas is an emotional support volunteer and trainer at Lithuania's national helpline, Youth Line.

Hanna Björg Vilhjálmsdóttir

Mother, Teacher, Feminist. Expertise in gender equality, teaching at the Borgarholtsskóla Secondary School in Reykjavík, Iceland.

Katalin Keveházi

Director of the Jól-Lét Foundation, Budapest. Senior project manager of human resources in multinational companies, journalist. Expertise on gender equality and women's empowerment, analysis of employment-related social issues and social awareness-raising. Counselling gender expertise to individuals, companies and the Social and Labour Ministry. Former board member of the European Women's Lobby in Hungary and the Hungarian Women's Lobby.

Hana Maříková

Researcher at the Gender & Sociology Research Department of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Her research interests are gender in/equalities in private life, in the public sphere, work-life balance, diversity management as well as family, social and employment policies. She is a member of the Men and Gender Equality Working Group that operates under the Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. She is deputy editor of the journal "Gender and Research" and a member of the Editorial Board of the Czech Sociological Review. She has headed and contributed to European projects and is a co-author of the European Study "Gender and Decision Making, Social and Economic Enterprises and Gender Opportunities" in 2016.



Anna Lénárd

Artist and urban guide. Since 2011 she is the organizer of creative dialogue tours in Budapest (BUPAP www.bupap.hu on unmastered political past, gender and minority questions.

In 2015 in an important location of their favourite tour the BUPAP-team did field research and collected oral memories with the active involvement of their audience. They shot a documentary on a forgotten catholic nun who saved Jewish children during WorldWar2.

From 2016 her organisation will concentrate on intercultural and interfaith dialogue under a new name.

Sabine Geller

Editor of "Danube Connect", Magazine for the Danube countries, international platform for journalists of the Association of Danube journalists reporting on co-operations, partnerships and projects along the Danube. Lecturer for graphic design, media and communication at University of Ulm, Germany.

Birgit Wolf

PhD, gender expert, social [service](#) at the Johanniter ambulance service/refugee assistance, Vienna and Lower Austria. Social scientist in media, communication and gender; anti-violence researcher, blog:gender:visual:communication and <https://genderview.wordpress.com>. Before Ms Wolf worked as lecturer at the department for Interactive Media and Educational technologies of the Danube University Krems; PhD scholar (thesis on gender violence and discourse) at the Dept. Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain).

Sofia Vaz Serra

Communication officer of the Portugese Platform for Women'ss Rights, Plataforma Portuguesa para os Direitos das Mulheres, Lisbon.

Christiana Weidel

European consultant for educational projects and journalist; M.A. in Philosophy. Trainer and lecturer at Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences; PR-manager and journalist; chairperson of the Austrian information and networking platform *The World of NGOs*. Expertise on educational and women's issues, mentoring and European project management, as well as civil dialogue, the structured and systematic communication between public authorities and organisations of civil society.

