

## Media Statement

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**For Immediate Release**

# **Driving change through Policy: ATHENA Project presented strategic recommendations for Gender Equality in European Research**

Policy Event at the European Parliament to unveil key policy briefs aimed  
at supporting inclusive, high-performing research systems

As gender equality becomes increasingly central to European research and innovation policy, the ATHENA Project hosted a high-level Policy Event at the European Parliament on May 13th, 2025. The event unveiled two pivotal policy briefs, offering concrete recommendations to enhance gender equality in both research-performing and funding institutions across Europe.

Funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme, the ATHENA project implemented Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in eight institutions between 2021 and 2025, driving structural change toward more inclusive and effective research systems. These final policy briefs are the result of three years of institutional engagement, implementation, and data collection, and are designed to help EU institutions and national bodies integrate inclusive policies that improve both gender balance and research excellence.

“Advancing equality in European research is not just an ethical imperative, but also a strategic one — it leads to better results and greater competitiveness. Strategic autonomy is key for the EU, and to fully achieve it, everyone must be able to participate — especially women”, said Paulo Nascimento Cabral, Member of the European Parliament and host of the Policy Event.

## **Featured Policy Briefs**

### **Policy Brief 1: Measuring Success: Gender Equality as a Performance Driver in Research**

This brief highlights that gender equality is not only a social imperative but a catalyst for research excellence. It advocates for greater awareness among policymakers and research institutions about the strong correlation between gender balance and performance. The brief further emphasises the need for the systematic collection and analysis of gender-related data to effectively monitor and evaluate GEP implementation.

## **Policy Brief 2: Gender Equality Strategies in Smaller, Younger, or Remote Research-Performing Organisations**

The brief focuses on the unique challenges faced by emerging and geographically remote institutions and offers evidence-based solutions to address limited resources, institutional isolation, and cultural barriers. It calls for inclusive policy frameworks that ensure no research institution is left behind.

“Smaller, younger, and more remote research organisations have the potential to become role models and key drivers of innovative, impactful gender equality and diversity policies — especially in regions that are currently falling behind in these areas,” highlighted ATHENA project coordinator Dr. Michelle Perello.

“It is also essential that we engage students through these policies. They are the future researchers, managers, and leaders of the European Research Area, and reaching them now is crucial to building a truly gender-equal and diverse ERA for tomorrow.”

The ATHENA Policy Event was a significant opportunity to reflect on how European research systems can adopt **long-term, scalable strategies** to advance gender equality. As the ATHENA project draws to a close, its findings and tools — including these policy briefs — offer a **clear roadmap** for embedding equality and diversity into the future of research and innovation across Europe.

## **ENDS**

### **Media queries**

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### **Notes to Editors**

- Event page: <https://bit.ly/athenafinalevent>
- ATHENA Website: <https://www.athenaequality.eu/>