

Democracy thrives on diversity. Without it, we cannot expect an equitable and inclusive policy-making process. At the Brussels Binder, we believe it is time for all EU stakeholders to step up and ensure a truly diverse range of voices are represented in policy debates. With this Manifesto, the Brussels Binder seeks to encourage EU stakeholders to organise and participate in policy debates that respect all individuals, along with their intersecting identities and experiences. With this, we also wish to send a powerful message to all European citizens and **encourage participation in the 2024 European Elections.**

Now, we are calling upon the EU's political parties and candidates, institutions, think-tanks, private sector, event management organisations, civil society organisations and the media to **ensure that any events taking place ahead of and after the EU elections have a diverse speaker line-up**, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability and socio-economic background.

How can I do this in the run up to the EP 2024 elections?

[Use the Brussels Binder database to find experts.](#)

[Use the Brussels Binder toolbox for best practices in organising EU policy debates.](#)

The Pledge - As an individual

- I pledge not to moderate or participate in panels that lack diversity, including but not limited to gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability and socio-economic background¹.
- When I cannot participate in a panel discussion I'm invited to, I pledge to nominate a speaker whose voice is often underrepresented in the given discussion to take my place.
- I pledge to follow the best practices outlined in the Brussels Binder toolbox to improve representation of different views and backgrounds on all EU panel debates.

The Pledge - As an organisation

- We pledge not to organise or endorse EU panel debates that lack diversity, including but not limited to gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, ability and socio-economic background².
- We pledge that our staff will not moderate or participate in EU panel debates lacking diversity, helping to make diverse panel debates the norm in the EU Quarter.
- We pledge to actively look for speakers with a background that is underrepresented in EU panel debates, through various diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility networks.
- We pledge to follow the best practices outlined in the Brussels Binder toolbox to improve the quality of our EU panel debates by inviting speakers and audiences from different backgrounds.

¹ Diverse moderators should not be seen as part of the diversity balance of the panel as they do not provide expert input in the discussion.

² Idem

Why this Manifesto?

At the Brussels Binder, we believe that we achieve effective policy-making by bringing together insightful analysis from a multitude of perspectives that reflects the society it impacts. EU citizens must see themselves represented in EU policy debates, especially now in the lead up to the European Elections in June 2024.

The Brussels Binder was launched in 2017 with the aim of advocating for greater gender equality in the EU Bubble. At this time, only one-third of speakers at Brussels' events were women. In two-thirds of debates, the majority of speakers were male and there were twice as many all-male panels as equal panels.³ Aiming to bridge this gap, we created The Brussels Binder, a go-to resource database for EU event organisers who seek to include expert women voices in their policy debates.

However, gender is not the only facet of diversity that is missing in EU policy debates - as was for instance, very aptly highlighted by the **#BrusselsSoWhite** movement that started in 2017⁴. The Brussels Binder has recognised this⁵(ref), shifting its focus from gender equality to gender diversity, including, but not limited to gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, ability and socio-economic background. The Brussels Binder believes that unwillingness or inability to look beyond the 'usual suspects' to speak should not be the norm. Europe desperately needs intellectual diversity for impactful policy, and the key to achieving this is including diverse experts that could drive innovative policy solutions.

We believe **it is time to recognise all our intersecting identities and commit to ensuring truly diverse EU policy debates**. We trust this Manifesto will inspire all to strive for diverse representation now and in the years to come.

What is diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA)?

Diversity is about creating an environment that **includes** and **respects** individuals, their identities and **experiences**. An inclusive and diverse environment is one where all individuals feel valued for who they are, their skills and their experiences. More than just a box ticking exercise, this involves "authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging"⁶

Panels should strive to reflect **all** the people that the policy under discussion would ultimately impact. For example, a panel of six white, middle-aged men discussing women's reproductive rights is not reflective of the target group. Organisations must have diverse and inclusive panels to have truly informative discussions.

³ De Castro Caldeirinha, C. & Horst, C. (2017) Women Leading the Way in Brussels. London: John Harper Publishing.

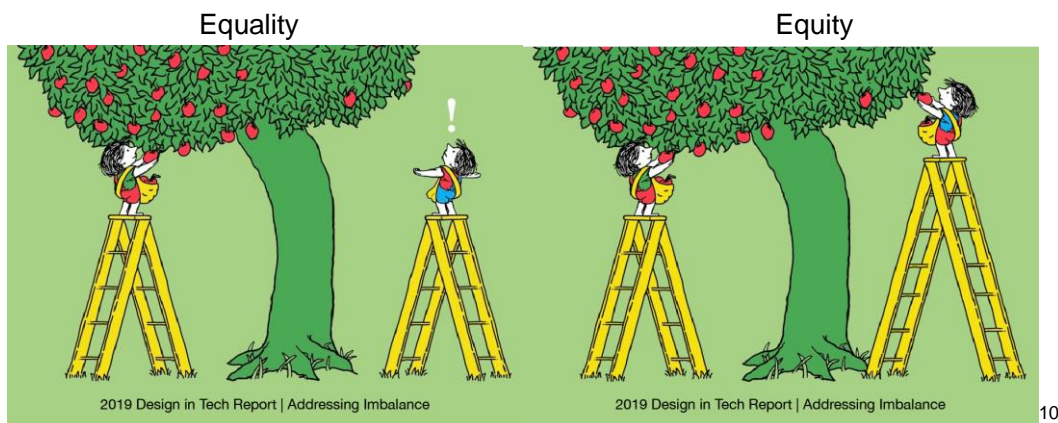
⁴ Politico (2017) Brussels is blind to diversity. Retrieved from: <https://www.politico.eu/article/brussels-blind-to-diversity-whiteout-european-parliament/>

⁵ Euractiv (2022) Diverse Women's Voices Still Unheard in the European Policy Debate. Retrieved from: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/opinion/diverse-womens-voices-still-unheard-in-the-european-policy-debate/>

⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2016). Deploying Casey's REI Framework: Lessons from the civic sites. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://www.aecf.org/resources/deploying-caseys-rei-framework>

In the EU Bubble, the current European Commission's leadership and the European Parliament have made significant headway in terms of achieving more gender balance, but a significant lack of representation remains. At least 10% of European Union citizens are from racial and ethnic minorities. Yet, just 4% of all MEPs in the current legislature have a racial or ethnic minority background⁷.

While the terms **equity** and **equality** may sound similar, the implementation of one over the other can have a significant impact upon different groups of people. Equality refers to the fact of 'being equal in rights, status, advantages etc'⁸. In other words, equality means everyone is given access to the same resources or opportunities. Equity, on the other hand, recognises that each individual/group has different circumstances, and thus ensures the allocation of the required resources/opportunities to reach an equal outcome⁹.



What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality is the network of connections between social categories such as race, class and gender.¹¹ The term was coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe that two overlapping categories may result in additional disadvantage or discrimination. For example, the additional discrimination faced by women of colour or queer people with disabilities. Using an intersectional lens helps us to connect equality and equity.

We all have intersecting identities, such as being a highly-educated woman from a working-class background or a man who is black and gay. They can result in experiences of privilege or discrimination, either all the time or in certain situations. These intersecting identities shape our unique perspective and experiences in life. **It is key that we acknowledge our privilege and fight social prejudices.**

⁷ ENAR (2019) ENAR's election analysis: ethnic minorities in the new European Parliament 2019-2025. Retrieved from: https://www.enar.eu.org/wp-content/uploads/2019_06-Racial-diversity-EU-Parliament-elected-MEPs.pdf

⁸ Oxford Learners' Dictionary. Equality *noun*. Retrieved on 09/11/2023: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/equality>

⁹ Milken Institute School of Public Health, the George Washington University (November 5, 2020) Equity vs. Equality: What's the difference? Retrieved from: <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>

¹⁰ Idem

¹¹ Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary. Definition of Intersectionality *noun*. Retrieved on 09/11/2023: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/intersectionalityies.com>

Accessibility within DEIA is the term people might be most unfamiliar with. Accessibility refers to the inclusion of all people, including, and most importantly, those who may have specific needs, both visible and invisible. It means “the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.”¹²

Accessibility within EU policy debates requires event organisers to pay special attention to ensure the event is accessible to all. For example, organisers should ensure the venue is accessible for wheelchair users and that event registration pages are easy-to-read.

In the run-up to the 2024 European Elections and in the next mandate, incorporating DEIA and using an intersectional lens in all our policy debates is the only acceptable way forward. Together **we must strive for truly diverse EU voices and pledge to make inclusive choices.**

¹² The White House (June 15, 2021) Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/06/25/executive-order-on-diversity-equity-inclusion-and-accessibility-in-the-federal-workforce/>