



## Special Session Proposal

### Gender Equality in Regions in Europe and Beyond

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#### Abstract

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union and a key pillar in its regional policies. Gender equality and empowerment is also the 5<sup>th</sup> amongst the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at the same being also horizontal to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. Its importance is underscored by the fact that gender equality is not only a social goal but also a driver of economic growth, social cohesion, and democratic stability. For example, the EU's commitment to gender equality aligns with the European Pillar of Social Rights, which aims to promote fair working conditions, equal opportunities, and social protection. Gender equality across countries and regions is essential for the realization of these goals, in Europe as elsewhere.

Addressing gender-based inequalities can prevent certain countries and regions from lagging economically and socially due to untapped female potential. In less advanced countries as well as less developed regions, women often face to a much greater extent multiple disadvantages to economic and social inclusion. In less developed areas women are less likely to work, have less free time, achieve less in terms of education and training and are far less represented in political positions. Women are also at a significant disadvantage in less developed regions, where they lag behind men in particular in the index domains linked to the participation to the labour market and to the political power. By focusing on gender equality, global, national and regional policies can empower women, foster social cohesion, and contribute to more inclusive development.

We invite researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to submit works that explore gender equality in the European regions and territories beyond the EU.