
27. Velvet triangles and more: alliances of supranational EU gender equality actors

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INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) has often been accused of suffering from a democratic deficit and historical changes such as direct elections to the European Parliament since 1979 were intended to overcome this allegation. Engaging better with EU citizens meant interacting more directly with social movements, (academic) experts and civil society organisations (CSOs), among them feminist actors. Likewise, the EU also offered an opportunity for women's movements promoting gender equality norms to develop specific features of supranational feminist governance and to create formal and informal alliances beyond the nation state.

The EU provides a complex multilevel governance system with reciprocal, though asymmetrical power relationships between CSOs and core EU institutions like the European Commission and the European Parliament (Lang, 2021). Herein, feminist alliances contributed to feminist governance as categorised in this *Handbook* by (1) networking to influence EU gender equality policy, particularly regarding employment and gender-based violence; (2) working within EU institutions to making them more gender-aware internally and externally; (3) fostering the adoption of gender equality strategies such as gender mainstreaming; (4) monitoring and benchmarking EU and member states' implementation of gender equality policies.

The rules steering the relationship between various (feminist) gender equality actors changed with new treaties, thereby impacting feminist governance within EU institutions (Jacquot, Chapter 25 in this *Handbook*). Civic engagement occurred via diverse channels ranging from EU advisory bodies, expert groups and protesting on the streets, to specific participatory elements such as the European Citizens' Initiative¹ and public online consultations by the European Commission. In recent times, feminist and gender equality actors increasingly face opposition from anti-feminist and anti-gender actors opposing progressive gender equality policies and aiming to influence EU institutions accordingly. Furthermore, transnational institutions steer strategic choices and agency of CSOs regarding their political actions and the scope of intersectional engagement (Irvine et al., 2019).

This chapter contributes to feminist governance research by taking stock of the core features of today's landscape of civil society actors and EU institutions. First, it recapitulates the history and formal rules of EU–civil society relationships. Next, it provides examples of how supranational alliances in gender equality policy have deepened, broadened and changed. Finally, it addresses intersectional mobilisation, opposition to gender equality and national trajectories in multilevel governance as important challenges to EU feminist governance.

HISTORY AND FORMAL RULES OF EU–CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS

Feminist governance research has highlighted women's and feminist movements and CSOs as powerful political actors extending the traditional arena of politics and opening up EU spaces for feminist agendas (Halsaa et al., 2012; Johansson and Kalm, 2015). In manifold political actions they mobilised at all levels, from the supranational to the local (Bee and Guerrina, 2015; Evans and Lépinard, 2019; Irvine et al., 2019). Scholars have produced different concepts to capture the relationship between feminist actors and transnational institutions. Prominent conceptualisations include Keck and Sikkink's (1998) 'boomerang' concept, Woodward's (2004) 'velvet triangle', van der Vleuten's (2007) 'pincer model', and 'Transnational Advocacy Networks' (TANs) (Lang, 2014; Montoya, 2013).

As well as investigating feminist actors' impact on policymaking, scholars have examined how the Commission and the European Parliament, particularly its Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM), utilised CSOs as a source of expertise for policymaking and a tool to tackle its democratic deficit. The Commission, the EP and the Council design the institutional structures and access points for CSOs and other stakeholders; they invite them to expert groups, hearings and consultations, and thereby partly exploit civil society for legitimation purposes. CSOs have to consider this when making choices about where to invest their resources and it often leaves them without much room for manoeuvre.

Opportunities to mobilise for gender equality are heavily reliant on the scope of the EU treaties. Until the mid-1970s, gender equality was merely declamatory and limited to labour market issues, with only article 119 (now 157) on equal pay referring to equal rights for women and men (Jacquot, 2015). Nevertheless, feminist actors utilised article 119 to put gender equality on the EU agenda, with Belgian lawyer Eliane Vogel-Polsky taking cases to the European Court of Justice for violating the principle of equal pay. Committed feminists within the European Commission used the rulings to initiate a first series of directives on equal opportunities in employment matters, establishing a 'pincer' pressuring member states top-down and bottom-up to make costly changes to their national legislation (van der Vleuten, 2007).

From the 1980s onwards, gender equality policy programmes designed by the Commission proactively connected gender equality actors beyond the national level and resulted in transnational projects (Ahrens, 2018). Subsequently, the Commission supported both the creation of supranational umbrella CSOs such as the European Disability Forum, the Social Platform and the European Network Against Racism, and their participation in EU policymaking (Johansson and Kalm, 2015; Sanchez Salgado, 2014). The most prominent example in gender equality is the European Women's Lobby (EWL) established in 1990 (Strid, 2014; Schrama, 2019).

Concurrently, feminist activists entered EU institutions such as the Commission and the European Parliament, establishing what Woodward (2004) labelled a 'velvet triangle'. The velvet triangle aimed to advance EU gender equality policy and consisted of a feminist network inside and outside EU institutions, covering femocrats in the Commission, women Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), women's movement activists and academic gender experts (Woodward, 2004). Scrutinising this specific mode of feminist EU governance, scholars challenged the implicit assumption of stability, highlighted the risk of feminist claims being co-opted by neoliberal governance and pointed to how the undemocratic lack of access

and transparency made intersectional mobilisation unlikely (Elomäki et al., 2021; Jacquot, 2015; Lang, 2014).

In terms of policy change, the velvet triangle mobilised massively around the 1995 Beijing Women's World Conference and forced the EU and member state governments to adopt the Beijing Platform for Action – including the strategy of gender mainstreaming, eventually included in article 3.2 of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 (Hubert and Stratigaki, 2016). This success was a major leap forward in supranational gender equality policy, extending its scope beyond employment and opening doors for CSOs and feminist networks to include new policy fields (Jacquot, 2015). Alongside treaty changes, however, the velvet triangle proved not to be stable over time and its specific mode of policymaking slowly disappeared after the Amsterdam Treaty. Today's actors generally conform to EU system rules and routines (Ahrens, 2018; Jacquot, 2015). In particular, the process leading to the policy programme 'Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men 2006–2010' fostered dissolution: the institution-transcending network incrementally 'shifted from close collaboration to sceptical observation' (Ahrens, 2018: 6). In 2010, this development was further accelerated when the Commission moved responsibilities for designing, steering and coordinating gender-equality and anti-discrimination policy from Directorate General (DG) Employment to DG Justice (Jacquot, 2015).

In addition to gender mainstreaming, the Amsterdam Treaty introduced article 13 on anti-discrimination, covering sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation, and thereby improved its coverage of essential human rights and CSOs' legal basis for claiming rights vis-à-vis European institutions (Ahrens, 2019; Verloo, 2006). Yet, the directives originating from the article created new hierarchies among discrimination grounds with, for instance, the Race Equality Directive broader in scope than previous gender equality directives and other grounds only protected in employment (Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009: 466). Likewise, the Commission's favouring of single-axis umbrella CSOs caused problematic exclusions for those not following this logic (Cullen, 2010; Rolandsen Agustín, 2013b).

The EU's Formal Setting

Inclusive forms of consultation are important to innovatory feminist governance. EU institutions designed different forms and rules to engage with citizens and CSOs, although mainly recognising them as tools to legitimise their activities (Sanchez Salgado, 2014) and as sources of expertise, information and policy implementation (Jacquot and Vitale, 2014). The Commission engages directly with EU citizens through public online consultations over laws and policies (since the early 2000s) and through the European Citizens' Initiative, enacted with article 11.4 of the Lisbon Treaty. The former, however, resulted in 'echo chambers' rather than transparent and inclusive exchange (Lang, 2020). Moreover, putting CSOs' expert knowledge on the same footing as that of any citizen potentially makes it harder for feminist voices to foster progressive gender equality policies. Similarly, the European Citizens' Initiative is mainly utilised by well-resourced EU groups, (supra)national political actors and also anti-gender actors rather than CSOs or small movements (García, 2015; Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017).

EU institutions also directly partner with CSOs. The Commission's DG Employment established and funded close and exclusive relationships with selected CSOs through social and

civil dialogues (Sanchez Salgado, 2014: 86). In the inter-institutional Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities, committed femocrats established networks with feminist member state experts and with women's groups through the EWL, which has advisory status on the committee (Jacquot, 2015; Strid, 2014). Moving gender-equality and anti-discrimination policy to DG Justice in 2010, which had no history with expert networks, funding or consultation, resulted in lost feminist expertise, ties cut and funding scaled down (Ahrens, 2019; Hubert and Stratigaki, 2016; Jacquot, 2015).

The Council and the European Parliament also transformed their relationships with civil society. The Social Platform, with the EWL as a founding member, has, for instance, been invited to attend meetings of the EU presidency trios² since 2000 and informal meetings of the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs since 2007; however, the EWL or other women's organisations have never been directly invited. Overall, the Council is usually considered closed to CSOs and scholars have found that it is best accessed through lobbying at the national level (Sanchez Salgado, 2014).

The European Parliament has established formal spaces through the European Citizens' Initiative, public hearings and so-called parliamentary intergroups where members of parliament organise informally around specific issues across political groups and – if wanted – with civil society representatives. As for public hearings, it has become common practice to invite CSOs, interest group representatives and (academic) experts to committee hearings (Crespy and Parks, 2019). For gender equality actors, such hearings play an important role in forming the policy agenda and positioning them vis-à-vis the Commission and the Council (Pristed Nielsen, 2013; Rolandsen Agustín, 2013b). Kluger Dionigi (2017) shows how parliamentary committees maintain close relationships with interest groups – often with business groups at the forefront, even if they are not generally more successful than CSOs. Despite the crucial work of European Parliament committees for the EU policy process, their relationship with less well-resourced interest groups – among them gender equality actors – receive considerably less attention.

DEEPENING, BROADENING AND CHANGING SUPRANATIONAL ALLIANCES IN GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

The EU functioned for a long time as an ally for women's movements and its main institutions were open to supporting policy change. The growing number of expert groups, committees and semi-elected bodies designed by various institutions shaped strategies and activities of the burgeoning supranational equality CSOs (Ahrens, 2019; Sanchez Salgado, 2014). With treaty revisions extending EU competencies, CSOs with limited resources needed to decide with whom to engage and which EU institutions to lobby (Cullen, 2015; Lang, 2021; Rolandsen Agustín, 2013a, 2013b). The changing nature and scope of EU policies made the (dissolving) velvet triangle adapt their organisational strategies to maintain involvement in EU governance (Lang, 2014). An increasingly professionalised 'networked fabric of issue-specific alliances' succeeded the velvet triangle (Lang, 2021: 226). Even if policy tools such as gender mainstreaming or gender budgeting stipulate participatory processes and the involvement of civil society, the recent EU implementation of these strategies reveals an alarming disregard of participatory elements (Cengiz, 2019). Moreover, with weakened insider positions, equality CSOs act increasingly as external watchdogs from the margins of the political system, and

simultaneously need to take up the challenge to overcome exclusionary single-axis mobilisation (Irvine et al., 2019; Lang, 2021).

The EWL, its activities, involvement in EU policymaking and internal organisational logic have received ample attention in feminist governance research. While the EWL has been acknowledged as a creation of dedicated femocrats, others have raised concerns about it representing mainly interests of white, middle-aged, professional women, pointing to a lack of intersectionality (Bygnes, 2013; Jacquot and Vitale, 2014), and about its gatekeeper role in policymaking (Ahrens, 2018; Schrama, 2019). This role stands out compared to the more limited roles of, for instance, the European Network of Migrant Women and the European Forum of Muslim Women, both of which directly address gender and ethnicity-related intersectional issues. The former evolved with support from the EWL, which still represents it in the Social Platform, thereby creating new dependencies (Lang, 2021; Stubbergaard, 2015). Interestingly, the EWL successfully lobbied for the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the Treaty of Amsterdam, but afterwards marginalised it on its website and thus in its own work (Lang, 2013); the same applies to intersectional approaches (Pristed Nielsen, 2013; Stubbergaard, 2015).

Crucial for feminist governance debates is investigating whether alliances can push through policy change. An instructive example of the velvet triangle losing its power is the failure to reform the Maternity Leave Directive in 2015, seven years after the European Commission proposed its revision (Ahrens and Abels, 2017; Kluger Dionigi, 2017; Seibicke, 2019). The EWL and trade unions successfully lobbied the FEMM committee to extend the Commission proposal, but this increased member states' resistance in the Council (Kluger Dionigi, 2017). Concomitantly, employer associations and member states lobbied centre-right MEPs to vote against the FEMM committee position, leading to a stalemate with voting postponed three times. In the end, the European Parliament adopted a joint position with a slim majority in 2010, but the proposal was then blocked in the Council and withdrawn by the Commission (Ahrens and Abels, 2017; Kluger Dionigi, 2017). This case suggests that the weakening of the velvet triangle provides the Council with sufficient power to block legislative proposals on gender equality policy (Ahrens and Abels, 2017). Similarly, proposals for directives on board quotas and anti-discrimination beyond the workplace were halted under both the Barroso and Juncker Commissions and only the revised Work–Life Balance Directive was passed in 2019. Whether the new Commission under Ursula von der Leyen will be able to reactivate the proposals and push through additional ones on equal pay and gender-based violence remains to be seen.

Another policy combatting violence against women and gender-based violence arrived on the supranational agenda in the 1980s, with the FEMM Committee playing an important agenda-setting role, well ahead of many member states (Montoya, 2013). Towards the end of the 1990s the issue became a policy field where the Commission supported the creation of transnational multilevel networks (Montoya, 2013; Roggeband, 2021). Furthermore, through strategic framing of violence against women as a public health problem, the European Parliament maximised its influence and took advantage of the fact that the issue fell under the co-decision procedure, giving the body more power than it may have otherwise had (Roggeband, 2021; Rolandsen Agustín, 2013a). Krizsán and Roggeband (2019a) illuminate that similar framings occurred in the new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and led to regionally specific patterns of coalition-building between women's organi-

sations and state actors. As a result, many gender-sensitive domestic violence policy reforms were adopted, before becoming again contested in EU member states from 2015 onwards.

Recent crises have also impacted gender equality alliances. The austerity responses between 2007 and 2014 primarily hit grassroots and member state-level CSOs and had a less direct impact on the transnational CSOs dependent on EU funding (Woodward, 2016). Yet, in light of austerity measures, the EWL changed its strategy to focus on policy issues where the EU still provided funding and simultaneously tried to secure support for organisational survival through other intergovernmental arenas (Cullen, 2015). Elomäki (2015) highlights that reorganising was prompted by the Commission and the Council shifting to a market-oriented gender equality discourse, making it harder to maintain policy issues not framed as an economic case. Despite these harsh winds, the EWL has maintained its presence in the EU arena and has used growing informal access – particularly to the European Parliament – to widen its scope of action (Ahrens and Woodward, 2020). In sum, the European Parliament and its FEMM committee has become an evermore important contact for networking around equality issues, while the potential of the 2019 Commission under von der Leyen to adopt a more nuanced and progressive approach to gender equality remains to be seen.

CURRENT CHALLENGES TO GENDER EQUALITY ALLIANCES IN EU GOVERNANCE

In addition to challenges originating from changes in the EU institutional system, formal rules, access options and the settings for civil society, three additional challenges stand out, together with how gender equality actors respond to them. These are: intersectional aspects, opposition to gender equality and different national trajectories in multilevel governance. As the following subsections show, each of the three requires adaptation of strategies and networking.

Intersectionality: Alliances Between Feminist and Other Civil Society Groups

Intersectional issues were disregarded by EU institutions for a long time (Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009; Lombardo and Rolandsen Agustín, 2016) and research related to them focused on the national arena and less on supranational EU politics (Bee and Guerrina, 2015; Evans and Lépinard, 2019; Irvine et al., 2019). In particular, the Commission supported umbrella CSOs representing one ground of discrimination and at best considered multiple discrimination, not intersectional aspects, with problematic consequences for those not following this logic (Cullen, 2010; Rolandsen Agustín, 2013a). The new Commission under von der Leyen, however, included intersectionality in the new vision of a ‘Union of Equality’ and the accompanying five core strategies on gender equality, anti-racism, LGBTQI rights, Roma people, and disabilities.³ Each of the strategies emphasises the intention to pay attention to intersectional aspects throughout, yet how to operationalise and implement this remains vague.

When examining whether intersectionality played a bigger role for major supranational gender equality actors, the picture is ambivalent (D’Agostino, Chapter 28 in this *Handbook*). At first, the concentration imposed by the Commission on one ground of discrimination was tolerated, if not welcomed, by umbrella organisations (Rolandsen Agustín, 2013b: 168). Moreover, the long history and specific national context of women’s organisations make it likely that some intersectional aspects are picked up more than others, often privileging the

needs of majority groups over those of minority groups (Bygnes, 2013; Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa, 2012). Yet, without an intersectional approach, CSOs, among them women's organisations, may lose impact due to their limited scope, and in the long run become untrustworthy in representing equality issues (Ahrens and Meier, 2019; Irvine et al., 2019).

The EWL is often criticised as being exclusionary and solely representing the interests of white, middle-class, well-educated heterosexual women, which makes receiving public funding, having a gatekeeper role in policymaking and access to EU committees, expert groups and hearings appear as privilege (Ahrens, 2019; Jacquot and Vitale, 2014; Strid, 2014). Stubbergaard (2015) emphasises recent changes towards more intersectionality, for instance, with the EWL creating the European Network of Migrant Women and maintaining strong ties with it (D'Agostino, Chapter 28 in this *Handbook*).

Overall, insufficient resources do not necessarily lead to competition and conflict and satisfactory resources do not automatically lead to intersectionality being adopted; whether intersectional mobilisation happens depends on EU institutions positively sanctioning it (Ahrens, 2019). As a consequence, the current linkages between equality CSOs and EU institutions resemble more a mountain skyline with a clear hierarchy of class – gender – race as descending levels (Ahrens, 2019).

Opposition: Networks Mobilizing Against Gender Equality

A growing feminist governance literature explores the multiple facets of opposition to gender equality and which actors mobilise and network nationally and supranationally against women's, LGBTI and minority rights (Köttig et al., 2017; Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017; Verloo, 2018). Anti-gender activists have developed the frame of 'gender ideology', seen as a threat to the traditional division of roles between women and men in society, in order to devalue gender equality policy and its actors (Korolczuk, 2020; Korolczuk and Graff, 2018). Thus, challenging gender equality and its activists has become a 'symbolic glue' (Kováts and Pöim, 2015) for a counter-movement whose exact actors are hard to nail down, but, among others, comprise the Catholic Church, radical right and right-wing parties, and movements against marriage equality. The counter-movements have become particularly successful in the context of the crisis of liberal democracy and democratic backsliding (Kováts, 2017; Krizsán and Roggeband, 2019b).

These actors have been attentive to new avenues for action. After the invention of the European Citizens' Initiative, the campaign 'One of Us' managed to collect the required one million signatures to force public hearings and a Commission response. The initiative officially claimed to organise around human embryonic stem cells but actually consisted of anti-choice actors strongly supported by the Catholic Church.⁴ The campaign caused open conflicts ahead of public hearings in the European Parliament, with 'One of Us' organisers trying to prevent opponents also being invited and outspoken conservative MEPs undermining coalition-building with progressive women's movements (Crespy and Parks, 2019). After the public hearings, the Commission refused to take action as all the ethical requirements proposed by the initiative would already have been in place (Hedling and Meeuwse, 2015). Nevertheless, anti-gender mobilisation by conservative, religious and nationalist actors has become increasingly visible as they shower progressive MEPs with threatening emails. As a consequence of this changing political environment and the weak gender equality profile of the Commission under Barroso and Juncker, gender equality actors have moved towards more

informal channels of participation, particularly in the European Parliament, thereby avoiding polarisation and conflict (Ahrens and Woodward, 2020).

Another arena where opposition to gender equality has become outspoken over recent years is that of combatting violence against women and gender-based violence (Roggeband, 2021). This arena, which previously had been promising, became contested not only by the EU merging and cutting back specific funding programmes, but also by new, more conservative, governments in member states, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2019a). While the political rhetoric often remained the same, implementation and accountability were challenged, thereby undermining legislation. More recently, the Istanbul Convention on Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (signed in 2011) has become a focal point of controversies in gender-based violence policies (Krizsán and Roggeband, Chapter 29 in this *Handbook*). Opposition to the Istanbul Convention is characterised by a strong anti-gender rhetoric aiming at delegitimising the norm and undermining its ratification by the EU (Berthet, 2022).

Multilevel Governance and National Trajectories

Important for feminist governance are challenges originating from the EU system of multi-level governance as such (Kenny and Verge, Chapter 6 in this *Handbook*). Lang and Sauer (2016: 217) labelled this as ‘politics of scale’ characterised by ‘a messy set of multi-scalar and inter-scalar policy processes in a plurality of spaces with many more entry and resistance points’ than in member states. Engaging with the politics of scale allows us to decipher different elements of agency and voice and informal spaces.

The EU level allows domestic feminist actors to counteract conservative gender regimes or to increase their parliamentary representation. For instance, Irish women MEPs, refused FEMM committee membership due to national debates around abortion and party discipline, were able to promote gender equality in other policy fields such as agriculture (Cullen, 2019). For women MEPs from South-Eastern Europe, gender equality was less contested in the European Parliament, thereby ‘socialising’ them to act in favour of women’s interests rather than influencing the parliament in a conservative direction (Chiva, 2019). Likewise, LGBT movements in different European regions forged a unified voice by deliberately utilising the notion of ‘Europe’ and related rights (Ayoub and Paternotte, 2014).

Equally important to feminist governance is addressing how supranational women’s organisations manage multilevel governance (Lang, 2014). The EWL is a potential bottleneck between domestic and supranational levels: whether domestic women’s organisations adapt or influence EWL positions often depends on matching frames, individual leadership connections and simply geographic proximity (Ahrens and Meier, 2019; Lafon, 2018). Furthermore, Schrama (2019) illustrates severe imbalances between Western and Eastern EWL members, with the former rich in human, financial and social capital, while the latter aim to compensate for their lack of resources by linking up directly with the Commission. Recently, as an effect of Brexit, British women’s organisations would have been excluded from the EWL; this was prevented by changing the internal rules and emphasising supranational ‘sticky networks’ (Minto, 2020). The change of rule potentially indicates ‘a more systematic broadening of the EWL’s reach beyond the EU’ by allowing for non-EU members, with Icelandic women’s organisations joining first (Minto, 2020: 1599).

Simultaneously, conservative and anti-gender governments – particularly but not only – in CEE member states started actively supporting and even creating so-called GONGOs (government operated non-governmental organisations) (Krizsán and Roggeband, 2019b). Such GONGOs have started to side-line feminist and progressive women’s movements and have become powerful counter-movements in coalition with their governments. The effects of conservative government-led national organisations have also become visible in the conflicts around the Istanbul Convention (Berthet, 2022), and the long-term effects for supranational feminist alliances are still unknown.

CONCLUSION

Feminist EU governance is characterised by promoting women’s community-based participation in policymaking, with transnational women’s CSOs and institution-transcending feminist alliances as core features. Feminist actors have covered a wealth of issues and managed to put their footprint on EU treaties, legislation and policies. Confronted with anti-gender mobilisation, the growing importance of intersectional aspects and managing multilevel governance, it remains to be seen how alliances will change and whether they can be maintained to promote progressive gender equality policies.

Future feminist governance research would benefit from closer examination of certain inter-institutional constellations. Previous alliances such as the velvet triangle have been shaken up, with gender equality currently institutionalised in different places (van der Vleuten, 2019). Whether this leads to new multi-layered velvet triangles deserves attention. Furthermore, there is a research gap regarding the relationship of the European Parliament and the Council to feminist and intersectional CSOs. Despite the European Parliament gaining power vis-à-vis the Council, exploring linkages between CSOs and parliamentary groups or the impact of anti-gender mobilisation on Council positions is in its infancy. Unquestionably, the history of supranational EU gender equality alliances illustrates the liveliness of feminist actors inside and outside institutions and their fascinating ability to adjust to new settings.⁵

NOTES

1. Initiatives collecting more than one million signatures in at least seven member states require the European Parliament and the Commission to hold public hearings; the latter must adopt a formal response.
2. The Council presidency rotates among EU member states every six months. The current, outgoing and incoming presidency together form the so-called EU presidency trio which prepares a common rolling agenda for an 18-month period.
3. Cf. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/dalli/announcements/union-equality-first-year-actions-and-achievements_en.
4. This informal coalition is also closely linked to the World Congress of Families (WCF), an international event using the frame of the ‘natural family’ to hide radically conservative views on gender and sexual equality (Pavan, 2020).
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