

AGORA

YOUNG FEMINIST SUMMER SCHOOL

7-11 Sept 2026, Brussels

REPORT



About this report

AGORA 2026 – Young Feminist Summer School

Brussels, 7–11 September 2026

Report prepared by:

Margarita Spasova & Shirin Hodzheva

Facilitators, AGORA 2026

With contributions from:

European Women's Lobby team, AGORA 2026 participants and expert speakers



Photos:

Lucie Havelange



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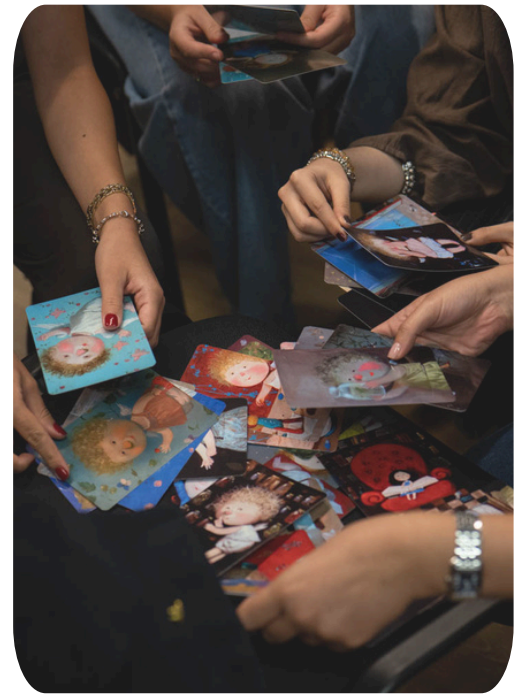
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AGORA 2026 brought together a diverse group of 37 young feminists for five days of learning, exchange, connection and reflection. The programme moved through different questions about feminist spaces and movements: who belongs, whose voices are heard, who creates knowledge and how change happens. These questions were explored through intergenerational conversations, participant-led workshops, discussions with EWL representatives and external contributors, visits to feminist spaces in Brussels, and daily opportunities for participants to reflect together. The programme combined structured learning with space for participants to bring their own knowledge, experiences and perspectives into the room.

The report follows this journey through the five days of AGORA, highlighting the people, conversations, activities and ideas that shaped the week. It also brings together what participants said they learned, what they valued most, and what they would like to see in future editions. The feedback points particularly to the value of connection: meeting other young feminists, discovering different realities and perspectives, and feeling part of a wider European feminist movement. Alongside this, participants identified areas they want to explore further, including practical advocacy and organising skills, deeper thematic learning and more opportunities for exchange.

“Transforming! AGORA has built up my confidence to speak out in spaces where decisions on women’s rights and access to education, political participation and health are made. I enjoyed having the intergenerational dialogue with the executive members of EWL as well because I got to tap into their wisdom and I will be using it in my journey of fighting for the feminist cause.”



“This has been one of the most thought-provoking and inspiring experiences I have ever done.

The possibilities of learning from the EWL members, from the board to the executives has helped me to better understand the implementation of feminist policies.

Nevertheless, **it’s the participants that have made this experience so incredibly unique,** each offering new perspectives, yet all of us sharing the same values.”



INTRODUCTION

Background

AGORA is the European Women's Lobby (EWL) "Young Feminist Summer School", held annually in Brussels. It brings together young feminist leaders residing in Europe, for five days of exchange, learning, connection and collaborative action. A cornerstone of the AGORA experience is direct, unfiltered contact with the women shaping European gender equality policy today, not as distant figures, but as allies, mentors and future colleagues.

Established in 2015, AGORA celebrated **its 11th edition this year**, marking over a decade of engagement with young feminists aged 18-30 across Europe and a growing alumnae network of over 300 participants.

Why it matters

Women's rights in Europe stand at a decisive moment. The Roadmap for Women's Rights and the adopted EU Gender Equality Strategy (2026-2030) are setting the direction of travel for the years ahead; the EU Directive on combating violence against women is entering national transposition in 2027; the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention is being implemented and monitored; and the My Voice, My Choice European Citizens' Initiative has demonstrated that grassroots feminist mobilisation can reinforce sexual and reproductive rights onto the EU agenda. At the same time, an organised backlash against gender equality is testing institutions and movements alike.

To respond to the growing challenges, AGORA creates a safe and brave space for young feminist leaders to learn, connect, and lay the foundations of the feminist future we all want, bringing hope in difficult times.

Aims and objectives

- Strengthen young women's activism.
- Bring together young feminists from different backgrounds and with different experiences to learn from each other and create connections.
- Set up a creative space for young feminist change agents to develop their activism.
- Build solidarity, empower young feminist activists and work together across borders to make feminism more inclusive and amplify the voices of feminist networks in Europe.
- Explore the concept of feminist leadership and power
- Help EWL understand young feminists' needs to guide future strategies.

Participants

At the heart of AGORA is the opportunity to bring together young feminists with different experiences, areas of expertise and perspectives to learn from one another and strengthen connections across borders. After more than a decade, the summer school continues to create a space where emerging feminist leaders can build knowledge and skills, exchange experiences and connect with the wider European feminist movement. Interest in AGORA 2026 was exceptionally high, with 789 applications received for 40 places.

The 11th edition of the summer school brought together **37 young feminists from almost 30 different nationalities across 4 continents**, currently based in 21 European countries.

The cohort was also intentionally diverse in terms of lived experience, bringing together participants from different socioeconomic, geographic and minority backgrounds. This diversity was central to the peer-learning approach of AGORA, allowing feminist issues to be discussed through different realities and perspectives.



In addition, the group represented a rich variety of academic, professional and activist backgrounds. There were university students and recent graduates alongside professionals working in civil society, public institutions, policy and international cooperation, communications, psychology, law, humanitarian action and community-based services.

Many participants are already actively engaged in feminist and human rights work, professionally or through volunteering and grassroots organising. Their experience covers advocacy for women's and LGBTQI+ rights, support for survivors of gender-based violence, reproductive justice, migrant and refugee rights, menstrual health and sexuality education, girls' empowerment, youth participation and climate justice. Participants also brought experience in research, policy advocacy, communications, community organising and feminist education.

These experiences were closely matched by what participants wanted to learn from one another. Their expressed interests ranged from violence against women and girls, reproductive rights and online gender-based violence to intersectionality, migration and displacement, feminist leadership, movement-building, policy change and resistance to anti-gender movements. Participants were also keen to strengthen practical skills in advocacy, community organising, research-to-policy translation, coalition-building and sustainable feminist activism.

This mix of knowledge, experience and curiosity became part of the programme itself. **Through the participant-led workshops in particular, participants moved between the roles of learner and facilitator,** sharing their own expertise on issues ranging from forced displacement and online gender-based violence to menstrual health, toxic relationships, workplace equality, storytelling and translating feminist evidence into policy. The diversity of the cohort was therefore not only a feature of AGORA 2026, but an important learning resource throughout the week.

“I’m grateful for meeting women of all ages and backgrounds carrying the same weights in different ways yet pushing the same mountain forward!”



“Connections across cultures and the globe”



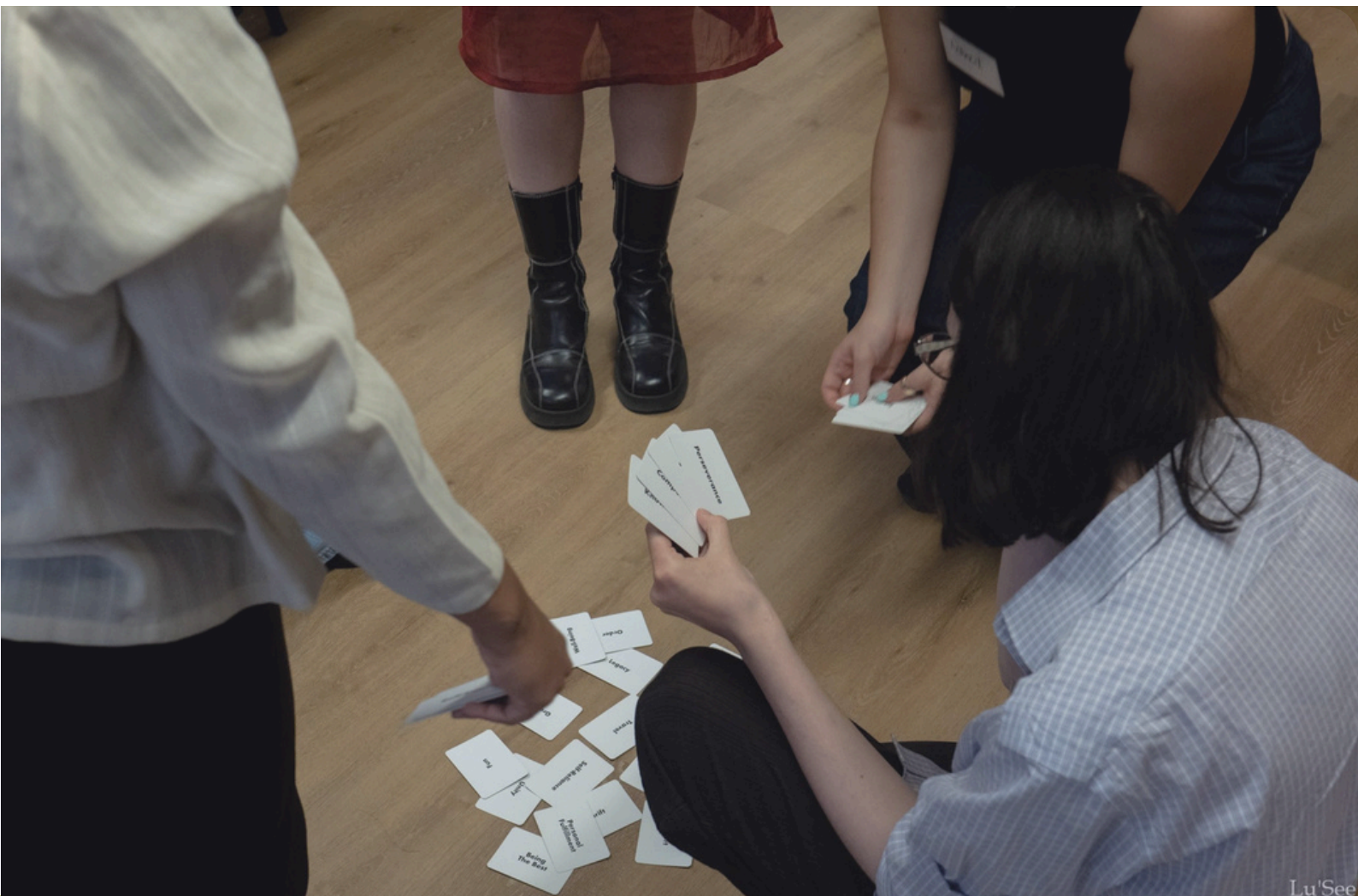
“It was a great experience that allowed me to connect with like-minded people and better understand how to organize the feminist movement in Europe.”



DAY 1

Who belongs in the AGORA?

Programme details



Official opening | Welcome words | Get to know each other

Identifying shared interests | Values compass

Programme structure and logic | Creating a Brave space

Welcome dinner | Messages from last AGORA

DAY 1

The first day was dedicated to discovering who had arrived at the AGORA. We created a living map of Europe showing where participants are currently living. All were invited to share the name they wanted to be called during AGORA, and add to it the **feminist power** they bring to the programme. The vibe was as diverse as the group. The first contributions to the space were filled in with powers such as **agency, action, anger, attention to detail, care, community, listening, empathy, visualisation, working hard, justice and joy**. This flow continued as participants moved from pairs to small groups of four, exploring what had brought them to AGORA, where common ground and motivation had been found.

Values compass

The getting-to-know-each-other process continued by building the group's Values Compass. Using a set of cards representing core values, participants were initially given a set of seven values. Through a series of iterations, they had to give some up, exchange others and eventually keep only three words representing their current priorities. During the plenary debrief, participants reflected on how valuable it was to hear that their values were often closely aligned, and how a shared understanding could emerge through diverse lenses. This part created the early sense of connection important to the group dynamics.

Hopes, needs and contributions



Brave space

The second part of the afternoon we introduced Brave Space and discussed how we would navigate the process together, with the understanding that a Brave Space would not always be a comfortable space. It would require us to stay engaged when conversations become challenging, while having the responsibility and choice to set our own boundaries and respect those of others. Some of the main points we agreed on were being mindful of our words and actions and taking responsibility for their impact; being aware of the space we take when we have more experience; and being brave enough to take space, even when we feel less experienced.

Daily reflections

In order to accommodate the learning experience realisation, participants were introduced to the value of the reflection process. Every day they would meet for 30 minutes in the same small groups, with a question for reflection provided by the facilitators. The groups were formed through a small discovery activity: each participant had to find others who shared a quote from a feminist, which also became the first small connection within their reflection groups.

Welcome dinner

The day ended with a welcome dinner, sharing Belgian food while reading letters from the previous AGORA cohort. This way, the circle was re-opened as a continuation of feminist voices, connecting those who had come before with those beginning their own AGORA journey.



“Very inspiring and enriching. It was fantastic to meet people from across Europe and beyond, exchange experiences, learn from each other, and build meaningful connections. Seeing such an international network of committed feminists was both motivating and hopeful.”



“The networking possible through AGORA was something I really appreciated. It’s difficult to create so many connections, especially when you’re not yet involved in the policy making world.”

“Women are not trying to navigate a simple world; they face every challenge head-on, fight against them, and at the same time try to protect the people they love. AGORA reminded me that I am not alone in this struggle ... and it helped me rediscover my own strength, the importance of solidarity, and what we can achieve when we stand and act together.”



DAY 2

Whose voices are heard in the AGORA?

The second day of the programme was dedicated to gathering voices from the movement, learning more about the European Women's Lobby and its advocacy work, creating space for intergenerational dialogue and looking into the challenges and opportunities the future holds for us.



Introduction to EWL | Intergenerational dialogue with ExCo members

Advocacy campaigns by EWL | Foresight workshop

Non-Consensual Intimate Imagery (NCII) across Google's platforms

Daily reflections | International food court

Stories, experience and leadership

The morning started with an introduction to the history, structure, member organisations and current priorities of the European Women's Lobby. Adèle Philtjens, Amélia Pinto, and Sabrina Terentjew from EWL's Secretariat shared with participants how the organisation works with EU institutions on policy development. This session helped participants put AGORA into perspective, seeing how it fits into the overall work of the organisations and learning how they could engage further.

The highlight of this first part was the intergenerational dialogue with members of EWL's Executive Committee.



Anne Negre, Daniela Dimitrievska, Edite Kalnina, Maria Jose Landeira Østergård, Marion Böker, and Teresa Nevado hosted conversation circles focusing on their personal journeys and work in the field of women's rights and gender equality. The conversations spanned a vast area of topics, from how to achieve parity and do policy and advocacy work, through cyber violence and protection for young feminists, to the importance of celebrating achievements. Participants shared that they really appreciated the opportunity to talk to women who had paved the path for young generations of feminists. One strong message from the session is that it is possible to work for gender equality and make change happen.



The morning ended with an **advocacy workshop** led by the Policy and Advocacy Hub at EWL focused on two important areas of work - ending violence against women and girls and achieving parity. The session started with an open question to participants, "What is violence against women?" that provoked a lively discussion and demonstrated the knowledge and passion gathered in the room. Concepts that emerged from the conversation were connected to the different forms of violence, gender stereotypes and oppressive systems and structures. Participants learned how the EWL does advocacy at the EU level through case studies and practical examples that were very useful.



Growing feminist futures: Strategic foresight workshop

In the afternoon the group explored alternative futures through an experiential learning activity led by Maya Doneva, adviser to the Secretary General. The session immersed participants in future thinking using objects, plants and gardening tools as creative prompts and inviting them to think about what we plant, what grows without being planted, what storms we survive and what helps us thrive. Groups time-travelled to 2040 where care is finally recognised as essential social and economic infrastructure, Europe has developed a feminist understanding of security, young women feel that democracy belongs to them, and AI is deeply integrated into everyday life and discussed how society reached these points.

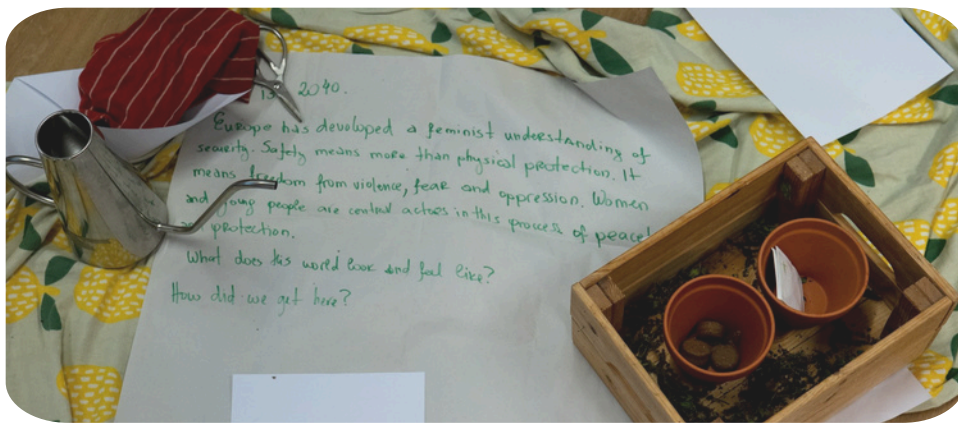
The exercise generated thought-provoking conversations around shared care, participation, violence, technology and power. Discussions about the future also revealed anxiety and the pressure participants feel as young feminist activists. The gardening metaphor carried through to the end. Each participant received a tulip bulb to take home and plant, a small reminder to think about what we choose to feed, where we put our energy, and what we want to grow through our activism.

Non-Consensual Intimate Imagery (NCII) across Google's platforms

The last session in this very intensive day was led by Sara Elnusairi, Nadja Blagojevic, and Lindsay Madejski from Google who talked about the company's approach to fighting online gender-based violence. They talked about internal policies and the reporting tools and mechanisms available to users. The presentation was followed by an active and critical discussion, with participants raising questions about Google's environmental impact, the working conditions and protection of people involved in reviewing harmful content, and the company's future plans to address cyberviolence. The exchange also opened a broader conversation about the role of large technology companies in feminist spaces and the relationship between corporate sponsorship and the independence of feminist agendas.

Daily reflection

After a long and thought-provoking day participants gathered in their reflection groups where they had to finish the phrases "I thought...", "I heard..." and "I'm wondering..."



“It is so much active work to stay idealistic, to stay optimistic.”



“The task is not simply to anticipate the future, but to ask what kind of future we want to construct and what role we choose to play in it.”

-Maya Doneva, adviser to the EWL Secretary General



DAY 3

Who creates knowledge in the AGORA?

Participant-led workshops



The third AGORA day created space for participants to step into the shoes of presenters and share their expertise, passion and local realities. It was an essential part of the programme highlighting the importance of lived experiences, co-creation of knowledge, and peer-to-peer feminist learning.

Each pair had 1 hour and 10 minutes to facilitate their workshop, with four workshop sessions running across three parallel groups throughout the day.

Below is a summary of all workshops.

DAY 3

Consent Education and the Law:

Identifying gaps in international legal frameworks regarding sexual violence & prevention tools

Aimee Wallace & Wiktoria Dąbrowska

Through presentation, examples and open questions, the workshop explored consent education, legal definitions, and preventive work. Participants engaged particularly with questions related to involving men and boys, working with schools, and how even if we manage to find the perfect wording in legal definitions, the problems are not solved. The workshop facilitators shared some useful resources such as the student-led initiative Got Consent at St. Andrew's University.



From Invisible Barriers to Policy - Translating Feminist Research into Policy that Sticks

Michelle Perino & Sofia Menghini

The workshop explored how feminist research can be translated into actionable policy recommendations. Using research on gendered emotional norms in European Parliament debates, participants examined possible responses to the case, considering the underlying problem, who holds the power to address it and potential unintended consequences. Participants were then introduced to the RAPID (Research and Policy in Development) Outcome Mapping Approach as a practical tool for translating evidence into policy action.

Reclaiming our digital space: combating the rise of online gender-based violence

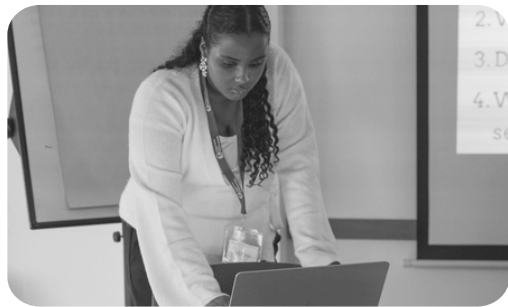
Andreia Almeida & Onitina Iavotriniaina

The facilitators addressed online gender-based violence and the challenges of making digital spaces safer for women. Interactive discussions, an online quiz and scenarios were used to examine different forms of online violence, relevant data, and practical steps for gathering evidence, reporting and responding to online threats. Participants particularly engaged with questions around AI, deepfakes, algorithms and platform accountability, while highlighting gaps in prevention, protection and legal support.



Sexual violence in media: from language to imagery Aulikki Lefèvre & Ashly Bernales Oliva

The workshop explored how language, media and popular culture shape perceptions of sexual and gender-based violence, including how terms and narratives can minimise violence or shift attention away from perpetrators and survivors. Participants examined concepts such as femicide/feminicide, the male gaze, rape myths and the Bechdel Test, analysing representations of violence in books, films and television. The workshop also discussed ethical representation, including intimacy coordination, agency and perspective, and concluded with participants developing an ethical representation test.



Designing dream workplaces Iris Sabilla & Sabrina Najib

What would a genuinely inclusive workplace look like in sectors where women remain underrepresented? The workshop invited participants to consider this question through examples from academia, medicine and construction work. Small-group discussions surfaced barriers including unpaid labour, sexism and power dynamics, exclusion from family businesses, and the lack of support systems for women seeking to progress in male-dominated fields. Building on these reflections, the session introduced relevant policies and legal instruments for promoting equal opportunities.



Forced Displacement and Access to Protection: Lessons from Ukraine and Georgia Anna Udovenko & Anna Nikoleishvili

Drawing on their lived experiences of and professional background the two facilitators discussed forced displacement in Ukraine and Georgia and the different protection needs people may face. Personal accounts of displacement brought particular depth to the session. Participants stepped into the role of social workers, working in groups on case studies based partly on real experiences. They identified urgent needs, possible protection routes and relevant support, considering issues such as housing, legal status, healthcare, etc.





“I learned how much we can learn from each other!”



“I have learned about menstrual healthcare in Poland and Ghana.”

“Learned a lot about reproductive rights in different countries.”



DAY 3



Code Red: Why menstrual health education is a global health issue. A closer look at Ghana and Poland - Julia Mikolajczyk & Nana Ama Abedi

The workshop brought together perspectives from Ghana and Poland to discuss menstrual health education, menstrual hygiene management and bodily autonomy. Participants reflected on stereotypes surrounding menstruation from shame and perceptions of being “dirty” or “overemotional”. The session shared examples of peer-to-peer and teacher-facilitated education in Ghana, including the use of brave spaces, while also discussing menstrual education in Poland. Participants made their own menstrual bracelets.



Reproductive justice and gender-based violence against pregnant women

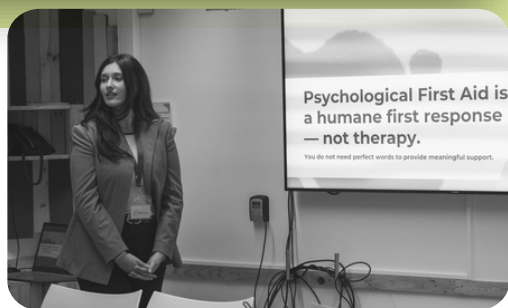
Maya Geneva & Manuela Haug

The workshop explored reproductive justice and women’s rights and choices across contraception, abortion, pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period, with a focus on informed decision-making, bodily autonomy and access to safe, dignified and non-judgemental care. Participants discussed systemic barriers, including misinformation, restrictive frameworks, the “obedient patient” expectation and shortcomings in maternity care, as well as the need for better training, empathy and patient-centred approaches among healthcare professionals.



Making the Invisible Visible: Intersectional Feminism, Structural Inequalities, and Legal Advocacy **Safia Mohamed Nor**

During the workshop participants were invited to look beyond individual events and consider the systems, power relations and structural inequalities shaping people’s lived realities. Through discussions on feminism and intersectionality, the session highlighted the gap between legal frameworks and lived experience and stressed that intersectionality is not a checklist. Working in small groups, participants analysed a case through four lenses (visible barriers, invisible barriers, power and response) to consider what an intersectional, survivor-centred response would require.



Psychological First Aid for Women in Crisis & Care as Feminist Practice Ella Yar & Emma Gaš

The workshop combined practical tools for supporting women in crisis with a broader feminist discussion on care, introducing the LOOK–LISTEN–LINK approach to psychological first aid and testing it through case studies. Participants explored care as a feminist practice, mapping paid and unpaid care and discussing the “care penalty”, the second shift, migration and the undervaluation of care work. The discussion highlighted the need for more respectful crisis responses and systemic changes to better recognise, redistribute and value care.



Seeing, Hearing, Speaking: Creative & Political Storytelling for Feminist Change Amal Chowdhury & Astrid Carrasco

The facilitators presented creative approaches to knowledge translation, using film and podcasting as examples. The group watched a short movie and discussed how it was made and the personal experience that inspired the storyline. The session also provided statistics on gender representation among podcast hosts and guests, alongside giving context on the rise of sexist content in podcasting. The workshop also introduced an activity to the participants to record statements which were to be gathered in a short podcast episode called “Lost Voices”.



Recognising, Breaking, and Healing from Toxic Relationships: Supporting Young People Against GBV Alice Buse & Giovanna De Feo

The workshop covered topics related to recognising signs of toxic relationships and the importance of peer support as well as professional responses to gender-based violence with examples from Italy. An interactive quiz invited them to identify green, yellow and red flags, followed by a scenario-based group exercise on how to support a friend experiencing a toxic relationship without judgement or pressure. In the second part participants learned about anti-violence centres and shelters in Italy with a highlight on survivor-centred support and the emotional impact of GBV work on practitioners.





"I have learned about menstrual healthcare in Poland and Ghana."



"Grassroots groundwork on displacement, refugee flows and immigration within Europe."

"The importance of consent!"



"Learned more about how much power language holds and is expressed in media."

DAY 4

How does the AGORA create change?

Thursday connected feminist advocacy, institutions, knowledge and memory.



Understanding EU institutions and initiatives

Mapping the gender equality ecosystem

Visit to feminist library

Daily reflections | International food court

Europe Is You: Young Feminist Leadership and the Institutions Within Reach

Thursday morning brought AGORA participants to the European Committee of the Regions to make the European gender equality ecosystem more tangible and accessible. Participants met Carina Ohlsson, European Committee of the Regions; Esther Luigi, Cabinet of Commissioner Hadja Lahbib, European Commission; Juliane Marie Neiiendam, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC); Sarah Cooke O'Dowd and Emma Rimonteil, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE); Laura Albu, former GREVIO member and EESC member; and Ana Peláez, European Disability Forum and CEDAW Committee member and former Chair. Speakers shared perspectives from their work alongside their own professional journeys and opportunities for young feminists to engage.

Mapping the gender equality ecosystem

Throughout the morning, participants were invited to build a working map of the European gender equality ecosystem, identifying actors at European, national, regional and local levels, the different functions they perform, how they connect, and potential “doors” for engagement. The conversations helped locate institutions and mechanisms within this wider ecosystem while addressing issues including implementation of gender equality legislation, pay transparency, violence against women, care, sexual and reproductive rights, intersectionality and gender-disaggregated data. Participants were particularly interested in how the European Citizens' Initiative works in the context of the My Voice, My Choice campaign.

Asking difficult questions

Participants brought concrete challenges from their own contexts into the discussion, asking how EU policies and institutions can respond to barriers faced by women and feminist movements on the ground. They asked how the EU can support abortion-rights activists in Poland, improve funding for feminist organisations and women's shelters, reach women in rural areas, and address data gaps in smaller countries. Further questions concerned gender equality education, engaging with CEDAW, organising a European Citizens' Initiative, EU priorities in the Global South, and the role of democracy and gender equality in engagement with the Taliban in Afghanistan.

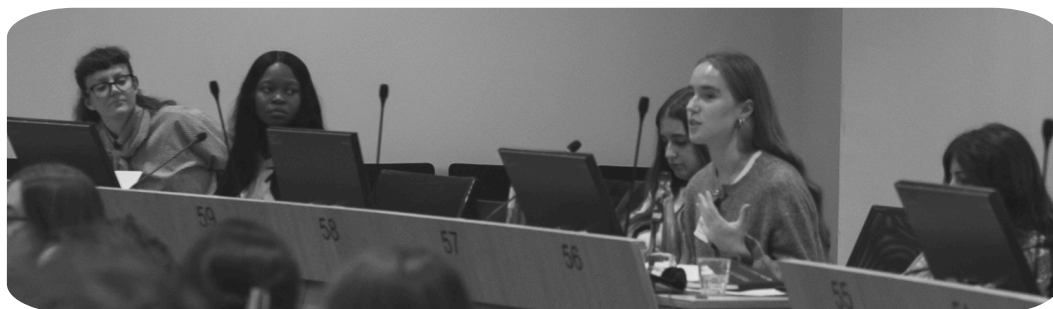
“Always have an intersectional approach.”

-Ana Peláez, European Disability Forum / CEDAW Committee



“You must build up your own network.”

-Carina Ohlsson, European Committee of the Regions



**“Find the issue. Organise. Find the organisation working on it.
Knock on our door.”**

-Juliane Marie Neiiendam, EESC, Vice-President of the ad hoc
Equality Group



“You must not underestimate your power to make change.”

-Mary Collins, EWL Secretary-General

RoSa Library

Thursday afternoon took the group to RoSa, a feminist library in Brussels, where Joren Janssens and Yasaman Nozari introduced participants to its history and the different ways it works to preserve and share feminist knowledge.

Founded in 1978, **today RoSa holds around 22,000 books in English, Dutch and French, alongside approximately 1,000 periodicals from feminist movements, archival material, posters and digital resources.** Participants learned about RoSa's newsletters, book clubs and educational toolkits, including recent work on the manosphere and femosphere. The hosts were very open and willing to share materials if anyone wanted to replicate their educational activities back home. One particularly interesting aspect to discover was the library's own classification system, which is now used by three other similar libraries in Europe. When asked about book recommendations Joren and Yasaman referred the group to RoSa's carefully curated and regularly updated reading list of 50 books from their collection.

A space participants wanted to return to

There was plenty of time to browse the shelves and discover the collection, and the library quickly became a favourite part of the day. Many enjoyed the space so much that they registered to become RoSa members.



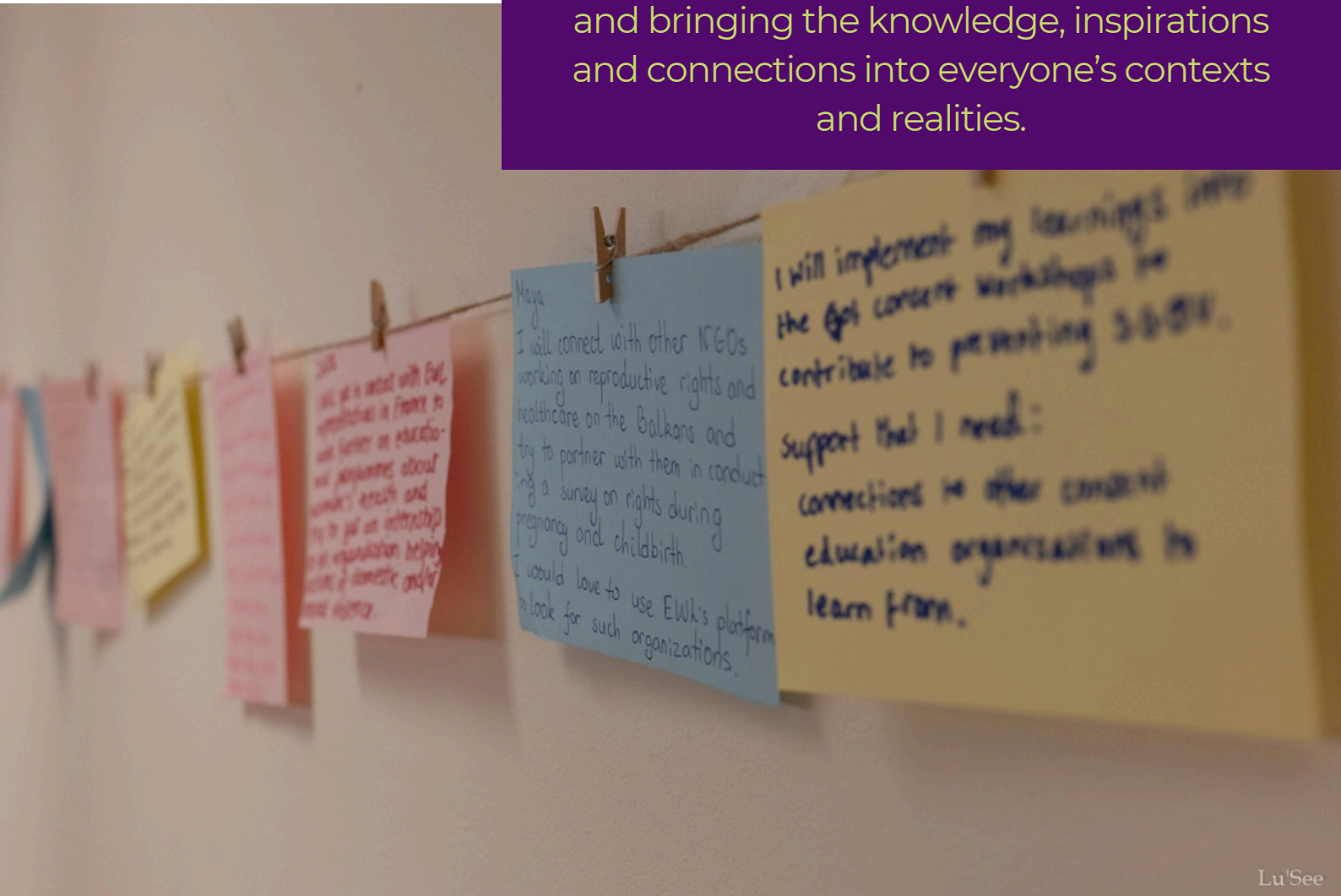
Feminist expression through art

The afternoon also gave us an unexpected and powerful creative moment. Lucie Havelange, AGORA's photographer, shared **a piece of her own SLAM poetry, inspired by her experience of participating in AGORA three years earlier.** Her performance brought another dimension to the afternoon, reminding us that feminist knowledge and struggle are carried not only through research, policy and activism, but also through art, memory and creative expression.

DAY 5

What AGORA will you build next?

The last day of AGORA was all about continuation, closing the circle of learning, and bringing the knowledge, inspirations and connections into everyone's contexts and realities.



Lu'See

Planning follow-up activities | Writing letters to the next AGORA

Final reflection on the journey

Certificate award ceremony | Recognitions

Bringing ideas further

Participants used the early morning session to develop a concrete follow-up idea using a worksheet with guiding questions to support planning and commitment. They exchanged their ideas in pairs and provided constructive feedback through the “AND instead of BUT” exercise, encouraging a supportive approach focused on strengthening and expanding ideas. The session concluded with **a display of participants’ commitments, creating a shared space that made their intentions visible to everyone.** It is always valuable to have a concrete first step towards being more vocal, connecting on a local level, starting to conduct surveys, collecting data, and many other actions to be taken forward across Europe by the amazing young feminists who participated in AGORA. Many of them expressed a need for support and cooperation, and an interest in connecting with the EWL National Coordinations.

Messages to the future AGORA

After that, it was time for them to write a letter to the future AGORA cohort, sharing their experiences, reflections, motivational words and thoughts gathered during the week. The letters will be cherished by the EWL team and shared with the AGORA 2027 cohort as a way of continuing the exchange of knowledge and inspiration across generations of feminist leaders, in the same way that this cohort was welcomed.

One final reflection

Before the official closing, it was time for one last reflection moment. Using the metaphor of reclaiming and redrawing feminist spaces, participants identified key learnings, challenges and missing perspectives, contributing to a collective understanding of how the space can continue to grow and evolve.

Certificates and final words

Certificates for participation were given personally to each of these 37 young feminists. **Each of them had a moment to share a few closing words with the group.** The main message we heard was how incredible this group had been, a lot of pride in the personal engagement and perspectives shared, recognition of shared dreams, and a great deal of gratitude for and honour in being part of this group. Emotions were high, powerful and honest.



“Coordinating AGORA is my favourite part of my work at the Lobby. Every year, we bring inspiring feminists in Brussels to share, learn, and grow together, and to continue their own journeys back home knowing that solidarity, connection, and the right tools contribute to a safer, better world for all of us, little by little. AGORA gives our work meaning and purpose, and I'm so grateful for it.”

-Andreea Carabulea, EWL Membership & Governance Officer



LEARNING OUTCOMES

The collected feedback offers insight into what participants took away from the week, the parts of the programme they found particularly valuable, and areas they would like to explore further. **Making connections is what emerges particularly strongly** - connection with other young feminists, with feminist activism across different contexts, and with the European Women's Lobby and European-level feminism. Learning from the experiences and perspectives of others was closely intertwined with the more formal learning offered through the programme.

"Very inspiring and enriching. It was fantastic to meet people from across Europe and beyond, exchange experiences, learn from each other, and build meaningful connections. Seeing such an international network of committed feminists was both motivating and hopeful."

Key takeaways

When asked to identify what they were taking away from AGORA, the most frequently selected themes were **connection with European-level feminism and EWL, networking opportunities and a sense of solidarity**. Participants also selected a deeper understanding of feminist activism in Europe, a stronger sense of feminist leadership and personal empowerment, alongside inspiration, new ideas for feminist action and stronger resilience.

Several participants described AGORA as a space where learning happened not only through the programme, but through encountering different lived experiences, areas of expertise and forms of feminist activism.

"AGORA reminded me that I am not alone in this struggle, that I can raise my voice in the face of the challenges I encounter, and that I can take action to create change. It helped me rediscover my own strength, the importance of solidarity, and what we can achieve when we stand and act together."

New and expanded feminist perspectives

The feedback also indicates that AGORA created opportunities to encounter feminist questions from new perspectives. Seven respondents said that the experience had shifted their perspective on a feminist topic, while another participant who answered “No” nevertheless added that they had **“expanded knowledge on feminist topics by a lot!”**

Topics mentioned included **migration and migrant women’s experiences, institutional/state feminism, intersectionality, violence against women, safe abortion, surrogacy, and the feminist and environmental dimensions of artificial intelligence.**

Peer exchange played an important role in this learning:

“Listening to the experiences of different women also helped me understand that not everyone experiences the same challenges, and that these diverse experiences are all part of the feminist struggle.”

One participant described a particularly concrete example:

“I spoke with other participants who enlightened me on the impact of AI on the climate and the livelihoods of women who are directly and indirectly affected by the industry...”

Programme highlights

The **participant-led workshops** and the panel discussion **“Europe Is You: Young Feminist Leadership and the Institutions Within Reach”** stand out particularly clearly. The **visit to RoSa Library** was another strong element.

The participant-led sessions appear particularly significant because they brought together learning and peer exchange. As one participant explained:

“The participant workshops were the most informative and inspiring, as it is a way to give the spotlight to activists who may not have had the chance to share their expertise before.”

Exposure to EWL and European institutions was another recurring element of the feedback. Participants referred positively to learning from different EWL members and roles, the intergenerational exchange with the Executive Committee, and the visit to the European Committee of the Regions.

“The possibilities of learning from the EWL members, from the board to the executives has helped me to better understand the implementation of feminist policies.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Facilitation, safety and support

The feedback on facilitation was particularly positive in relation to the atmosphere created during the week. Participants described the facilitation as warm, engaging, inclusive, dynamic and open.

“Their facilitation style was very engaging and I really enjoyed the activities they led. They also created a space that felt very open and one that I felt able to ask questions without judgement.”

The support and care provided by the EWL team was also rated positively.

Organisation and logistics

Feedback on the practical organisation was generally positive. Accommodation, the information pack and participant biographies were particularly well rated, while the venue also received predominantly positive feedback. Participants appreciated the organisation of the programme and the information provided before and during AGORA.

Areas for further exploration

Both the written feedback and the final informal reflection point towards an appetite for **more depth and more opportunities to translate feminist knowledge into practical activist tools**. Suggestions in the feedback included more time for particular topics and further work on advocacy strategies, campaigning, lobbying, policy analysis, stakeholder engagement and communication with policymakers.

The final reflection broadened this picture further. Participants proposed topics including ecofeminism; intersectionality; women's health, migrant and refugee women; class; art and creative expression; and methodologies for activism. Others were interested in exploring how the network created at AGORA could be used concretely after the summer school.

This points to a useful direction for future editions: maintaining the strong emphasis on peer learning, connection and exposure to different feminist perspectives, while creating additional space for deeper thematic exploration and practical skills-building.

More opportunities to practise advocacy and organising skills

Participants expressed a strong interest in practical and strategic skills, including campaigning, lobbying, public speaking, stakeholder engagement and navigating EU institutions. Future editions could create more opportunities to practise these skills through hands-on activities, simulations and workshops, complementing expert input with tools that participants can apply in their own activism and professional contexts.

More participatory and in-depth learning

Interactive, creative and participant-led approaches were particularly valued. Future programmes could continue to prioritise non-formal and experiential methodologies while allowing more time to explore selected topics in depth. Participants identified a wide range of areas they would like to see further represented, given in the areas for exploration above. These suggestions could inform future speakers, workshops and participant-led sessions.

Keeping feminist values at the centre of programme choices

Some of the final reflections also raised questions about how the values discussed during AGORA are reflected in the programme itself. Future editions could continue considering sustainability and inclusion in practical and organisational choices, while creating space for critical discussion about the role of technology, AI and corporate actors in feminist movements. This could provide an opportunity to examine not only how these actors and technologies affect women's rights, but also the questions of power, accountability and values that accompany their involvement in feminist spaces.

NEXT STEPS

AGORA does not end when participants leave Brussels. The commitments made by them point to a strong desire to take what they experienced at AGORA beyond the summer school itself.

Turning learning into action

A recurring theme was the intention to translate learning into work already happening in participants' communities. Some **identified very specific areas for action, including abortion and reproductive rights, consent education, violence against women, migration and refugee rights, and more inclusive feminist organising.** Others focused on changing everyday practice such as challenging discrimination, speaking more openly about feminist issues and creating spaces where women and girls can participate and be heard.

Several commitments were particularly concrete, showing participants already thinking about who they need to contact, what they want to develop and where they can contribute:

“I will reach out to organisations focused on abortion to contribute to start the conversation about abortion aftercare. I would need/appreciate the platform to share my story and raise awareness.”

“I will find/start an organisation that will support me to contribute to consent education, changing the law and creating safe spaces for girls.”

“I will develop an intersectional and feminist (design) brand identity for an organisation supporting refugees and migrants to contribute to an intersectional feminist fight for dignity & liberation.”

NEXT STEPS

Staying connected to the EWL network

The cards also show that participants see AGORA as the beginning of longer-term engagement rather than a stand-alone experience. Many explicitly asked for stronger links with their EWL National Coordination, opportunities to connect with women's rights organisations in their countries, and continued access to feminist networks, resources and opportunities.

“I want to be connected with the national coordination to know of more opportunities close to home and have local impact.”

“Support that I need from the EWL National Coordination is to keep being vocal about feminist and gender issues, not stay silent, involve as many people as possible, especially young people. I would also need more accessible opportunities for young people to participate, share knowledge and to connect.”

As a direct follow-up to AGORA 2026, participants will be invited to join the **AGORA Alumnae community**, allowing them to stay connected with one another and with previous generations of AGORA participants, exchange opportunities and continue supporting each other's work. They will also be put in touch with their respective EWL National Coordinations, responding directly to the interest expressed by them and helping them connect with feminist organisations, initiatives and opportunities at national level. Together, these two channels will help carry the connections, ideas and commitments developed during AGORA 2026 into participants' work and activism beyond the summer school.

CONCLUSION

AGORA 2026 leaves behind more than five days of activities. It leaves a group of feminists who have met, listened to each other, shared knowledge, challenged ideas and started connections that can continue in different places and contexts. Some things will be taken forward through concrete actions, some through new relationships and some simply through questions that participants are not ready to let go of yet. The space they created together will now become part of their own work and activism, while the messages they left for the next cohort will become part of the space that future participants inherit. AGORA continues in this way: each group adds something, changes something and passes it on.



Funding and support

[CERV-2026-DAPHNE](#) funding call currently open with a deadline on 5th November.

There are five strands:

- Protecting and supporting victims and survivors of gender-based violence
- Supporting the achievement of the objectives of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence in the Union and the implementation of the Directive on combating VAW and domestic violence
- Preventing gender-based violence
- Strengthen integrated child protection systems (CPS) incl. via cross-sectoral collaboration, and ensure child-centred, coordinated responses to violence against children, to contribute to the implementation of Commission Recommendation on integrated CPS
- Supporting intermediary organisations (providing financial support to civil society organisations) working in the fields of gender-based violence and violence against children

Webinars and learning opportunities

- [Upcoming EWL webinars](#)
- [EWL work on ending VAWG](#)
- [EWL Parity Now Campaign](#)

Policy and advocacy

- [EIGE Gender Equality Index](#)
- [EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030](#)
- [Roadmap for women's rights](#)
- [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#)
- [European Citizens' Initiative](#)
- [My Voice, My Choice](#) campaign.

More inspiration and resources

- [Got Consent](#) - student-led initiative at St. Andrew's University
- [RAPID \(Research and Policy in Development\) Outcome Mapping Approach](#)
- [Recognising violence](#) - Italian language video
- [RoSa Library's 50 recommended titles](#)
- [The danger of a single story](#), a TED talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

WORDS OF GRATITUDE

AGORA 2026 was made possible by many people, and we would like to end by acknowledging them.

First, thank you to the 37 participants who made the week what it was. Thank you for bringing your experiences and knowledge into the room, for asking difficult questions, facilitating workshops, listening to one another and being generous with your ideas. The final reflections speak about friendship, sisterhood, inspiring stories, support and, simply, the time spent together.

Warm thanks go to the European Women's Lobby team, who put enormous work into making the 11th AGORA possible and trusted us to accompany this group through the week. We are equally grateful to the EWL National Coordinations, who helped AGORA reach young feminists across Europe and who will now provide an important connection between participants and feminist work in their countries.

Thank you to all the speakers, guests and organisations who shared their knowledge, work and experiences with the group, and to RoSa Library for opening its doors to us and giving participants the opportunity to explore an extraordinary collection of feminist knowledge and history.

And thank you to everyone else whose work, often behind the scenes, helped turn five days in Brussels into the shared experience reflected in these words:

“So many ways of being a feminist (co)exist. Just choose the one that is right for you!”

THANK YOU!