Gender Representation at Events

Annual Report 2022

Since June 2022, Agora Energiewende, Agora Industry and Agora Agriculture have been committed to ensuring gender diversity at all Agora-branded public events. In addition to having evenly balanced panels of speakers, this principle also applies to the time allocated to speakers as well as to comments and questions from the floor (for more details, please refer to our published policy document).

As part of the Gender Balance Policy, we also undertake to document and publish both the current position and any developments with regard to gender diversity. This first report, for the year 2022, covers a total of 24 public events – due to the coronavirus mostly online, sometimes hybrid – and is primarily a stock-taking exercise, as there are no comparable figures from previous years. In the future, Agora plans to publish a yearly report covering the preceding year.

Composition of the speakers’ panel at 24 Agora public events

Our first principle is:

→ A balanced gender representation for podiums and presentations:
  • At events with three speakers or fewer, at least one of them shall be female (not including the moderator)
  • At events with four speakers or more, women and men shall be equally represented or in a ratio of 2:3 (not including moderators)

We will publish:

→ The percentage of female speakers at Agora events
→ The percentage of all-male panels (manels)
→ The percentage of panels with equal representation (including events with a higher proportion of female speakers)

Across the 24 events in 2022, 59 women and 103 men sat on Agora podiums, including both digital and physical. This represents a ratio of 36.42 percent women versus 63.58 percent men.
Out of a total of six events with smaller panels (up to three speakers), five had one female speaker each. Thus, in these five cases, the goal of gender balance in panels and presentations was achieved. In one instance, we were unable to secure a female speaker, so on that occasion we failed to achieve our goal due to having an all-male panel – a so-called manel. This event took place (January 2022) before the announcement of our Gender Balance Policy (June 2022).

Eighteen events involving larger panels (four or more speakers) were held, with equal numbers of women and men on the panel in three cases and more women than men in two cases. Four times, the ratio of women to men on the panel was 2:3. Thus, Agora clearly met its targets in half of these events.

However, in the remaining nine Agora events with four or more people on the podium, the ratio of women to men was only 1:2 or worse.

Looking at the 24 Agora events held in 2022, the Gender Balance Policy targets were met in 14 cases – and missed in 10.

Overall, it is clear that, since the introduction of the policy last year, colleagues at Agora have been engaging with the issue of the distribution of male and female speakers on panels much more intensively.

Regarding Agora’s participation in panels at third-party events, all male colleagues are encouraged to decline invitations to manels, i.e. all-male panels, and instead to propose a female speaker either from Agora or from another organisation.

In 2022, this precept led in three cases to colleagues cancelling their participation in panel discussions or passing it over to a female colleague, or else making their acceptance conditional on the additional invitation of one woman.
Speaking time

Our second principle is:

→ Equal speaking time and active participation for all speakers

Currently, we do not cut short anyone’s speaking time, but we make sure that the time allocation is balanced between male and female speakers when planning the programme – regardless of the gender balance.

The extent to which strict management of speakers should be practised for panel discussions, which ideally should be conducted in a lively manner and should also include questions from the audience to specific members of the panel, is a matter for discussion. Overly rigid management may result in a dull debate. We are open to ideas on how to meet this challenge.

Contributions from female members of the audience

Our third principle is:

→ Contributions from female audience members will be prioritised

We do not record any data regarding contributions from the floor or who they come from. However, our events team continuously reminds colleagues organising events – both in the run-up to and during the event itself – not to overlook women who indicate that they would like to speak.