DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)
In COST ACTION Neutro-NARPS

Prof. Aleksandra Catic Dordevic
Diversity Equality Inclusion Committee Chair, Neutro-NARPS
Krakov, Sep 2026.

cost EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DEI?

- **Diversity** — the mix of nationalities, disciplines, career stages, genders and backgrounds that make up the Action's network.

- **Equality** — fair access to funding, mobility grants and leadership roles, regardless of the country or institution

- **Inclusion** — a working culture where every member's voice genuinely shapes the Action's decisions, activities and outputs.

Three connected ideas that shape how our research network works together.

DEI IS ALREADY BUILT INTO HOW COST WORKS

- The **COST Excellence & Inclusiveness Policy** widens participation across Europe — giving every researcher a real route into leadership, regardless of location, age or gender.

GEOGRAPHIC & INSTITUTIONAL INCLUSIVITY

- Active support for researchers from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs) to set up and join Actions.
- Extra support for centers with limited resources to access shared infrastructure and training.
- Gender balance is a mandatory consideration in every Action's planning.
- Young researchers are actively encouraged to lead Working Groups and manage grants.

Half of the COST budget is directed toward activities that advance these goals.

THE POLICY, IN NUMBERS

47% average share of women across all COST Action participants

52% of COST Action leadership positions are held by women

37% of new Action proposers in 2025 came from Inclusiveness Target Countries

89% of participants reported a positive experience in COST Actions (2025)

Source: COST Association — Gender Equality overview & 2025 Annual Report

NEUTRO-NARPS (CA 24124) in numbers:

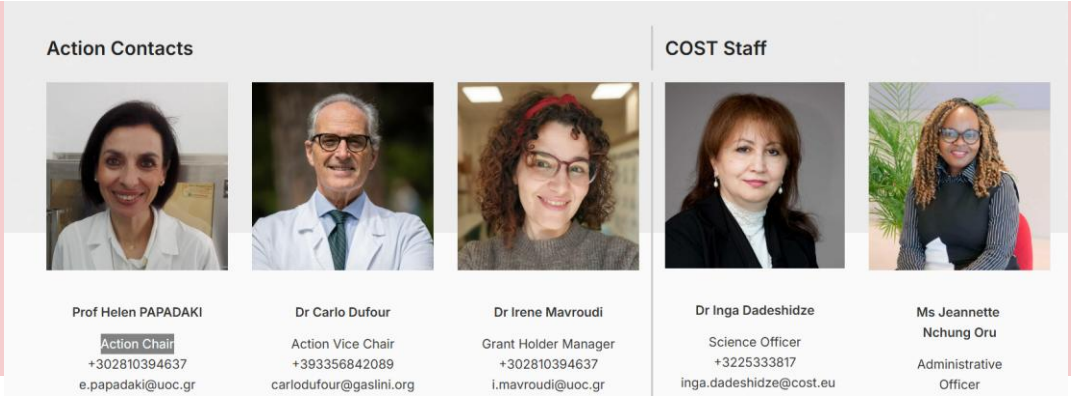
22 MC are women

8 8/11 Leadership roles in Action are women and 12/30 Additional positions

8 COST Members non- ITCs

18 COST Members ITCs

2 COST Near Neighbour Countries (NNCs)



3 International Partner Countries (IPCs) – (USA, Brazil Hong Kong)

2 Participating Organization (EHA,)

Network for the Advancement of Neutropenia Research and Patient Support Neutro-NARPS

WHY DEI STRENGTHENS COLLABORATION

FOR RESEARCH QUALITY

- Interdisciplinary collaboration is now the norm across COST — over half of recent proposals combine two or more scientific fields.
- Diverse teams bring a wider range of methods and perspectives to shared problems, a well-documented driver of more robust, creative outcomes.

FOR THE NETWORK

- Equal access to STSMs, grants and leadership roles keeps talent engaged from every member country.
- An inclusive culture is what creates lasting professional network.

Conclusion:
DEI strengthens scientific excellence by ensuring innovation across our Action is inclusive, equitable, and reaches every member country.

WHAT DO OUR MEMBERS ACTUALLY THINK?

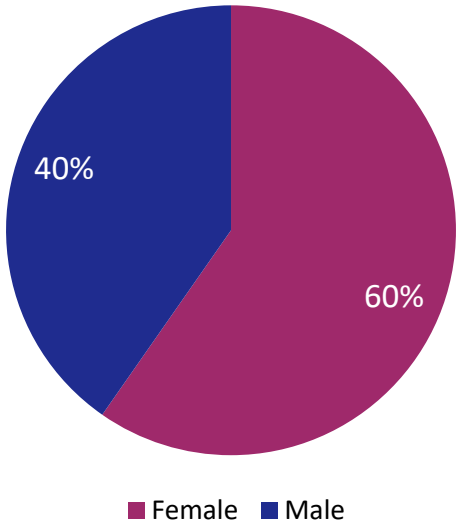
The rest of this presentation shares the results of our Action's own DEI questionnaire — how members experience diversity, equality and inclusion, and where we can improve as a network.

SURVEY RESULTS

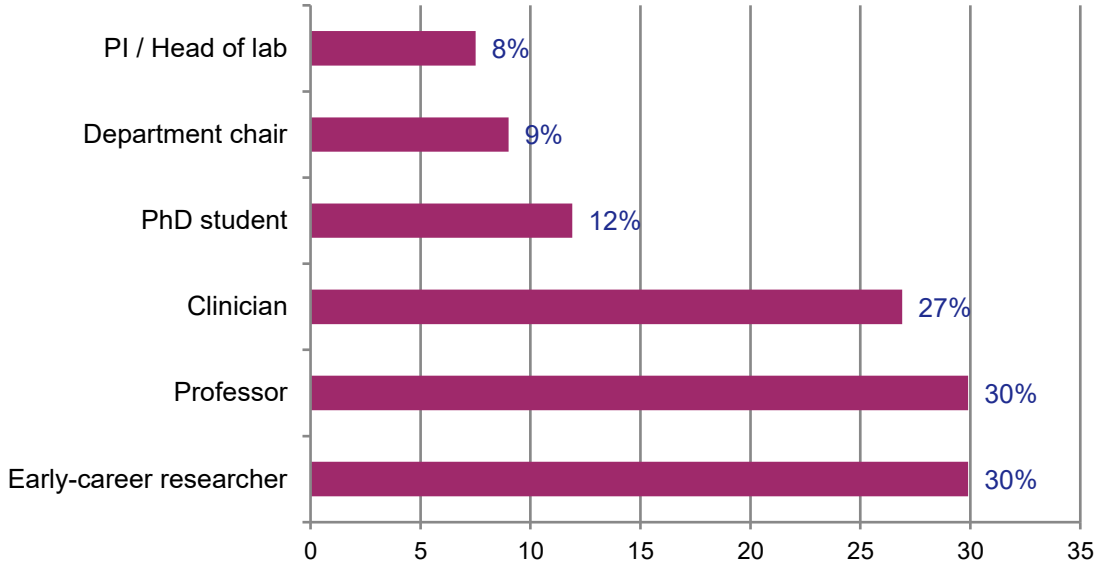


WHO RESPONDED?

GENDER OF RESPONDENTS



CURRENT ROLE (TOP CATEGORIES, MULTI-SELECT)



Comment:

67 members responded — a sample of 41,87% of action WG members (67/160)

Respondents: slightly female (60%), spanning career stages from PhD students to professors.

WHO RESPONDED?

COUNTRIES: 23

Full members 19
(ITC 12)
NNC 2
IPC 2

CURRENT CATEGORIES

YRI 24
SR 43

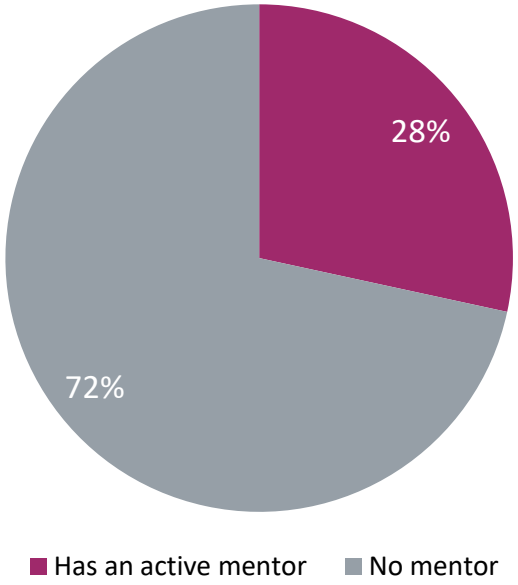
Comment:

67 members responded — a sample of 41,87% of registrated WG members (67/160)

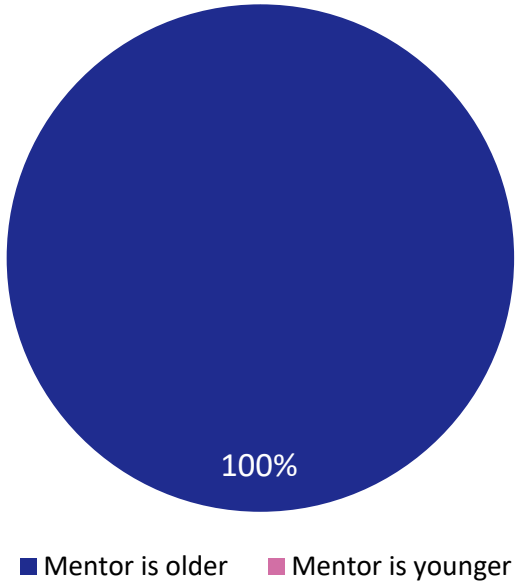
Respondents: slightly female (60%), spanning career stages from PhD students to professors, with 35.8% of YRI.

THE MENTORSHIP GAP

Do you currently have a mentor who actively supports your career development?



Of those with a mentor (n=19): is your mentor younger than you?



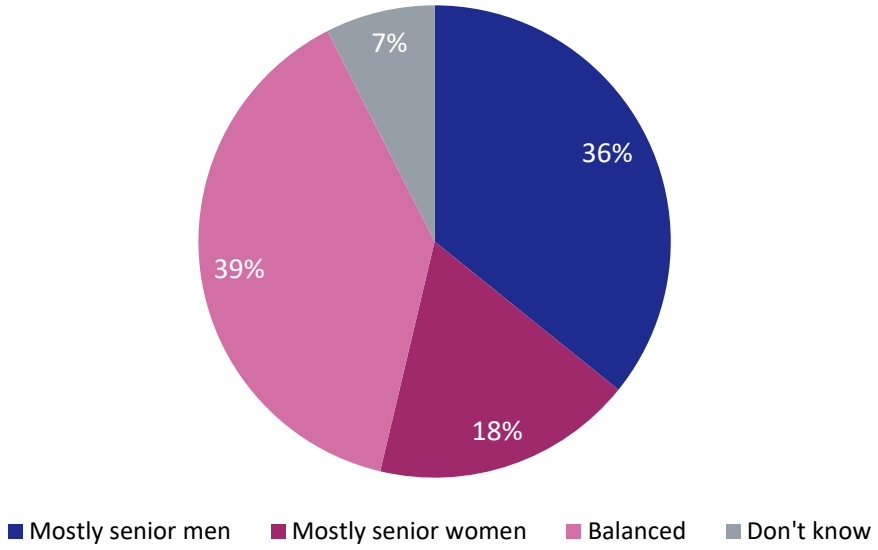
Comment:

Nearly 3 in 4 participant s have no active mentor, and every mentoring relationship that does exist follows the traditional senior-to-junior direction.

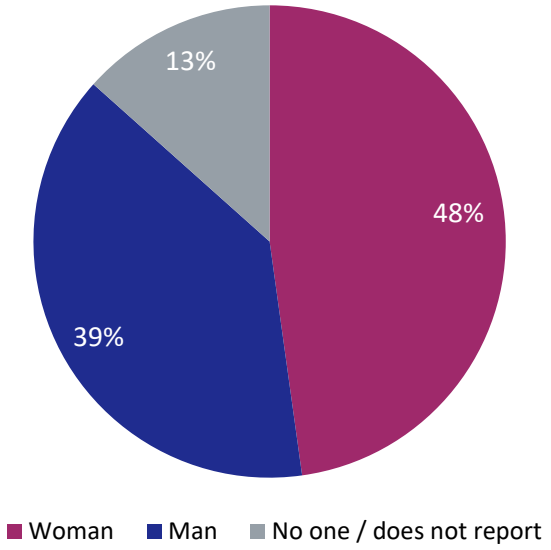
A structured, action-wide mentorship scheme — including reverse-mentoring options — is a concrete, low-cost option.

WHO HOLDS THE DECISION-MAKING POWER?

STRATEGIC RESEARCH DECISIONS AT YOUR INSTITUTION



GENDER OF IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR



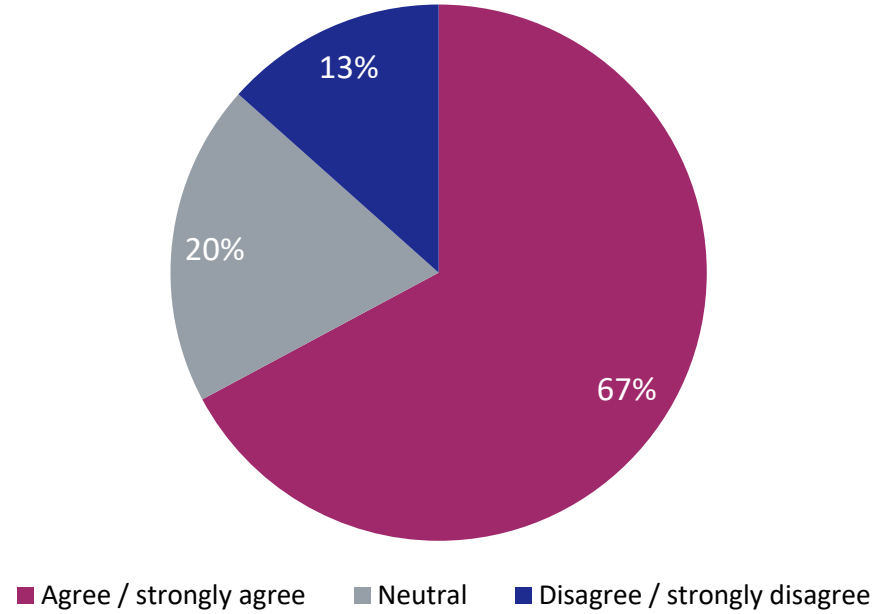
Comment:

Despite a majority-female respondent pool, over a third say strategic research decisions at their institution are mostly made by senior men.

Immediate supervision is more gender-balanced.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT: IS IT EQUAL?

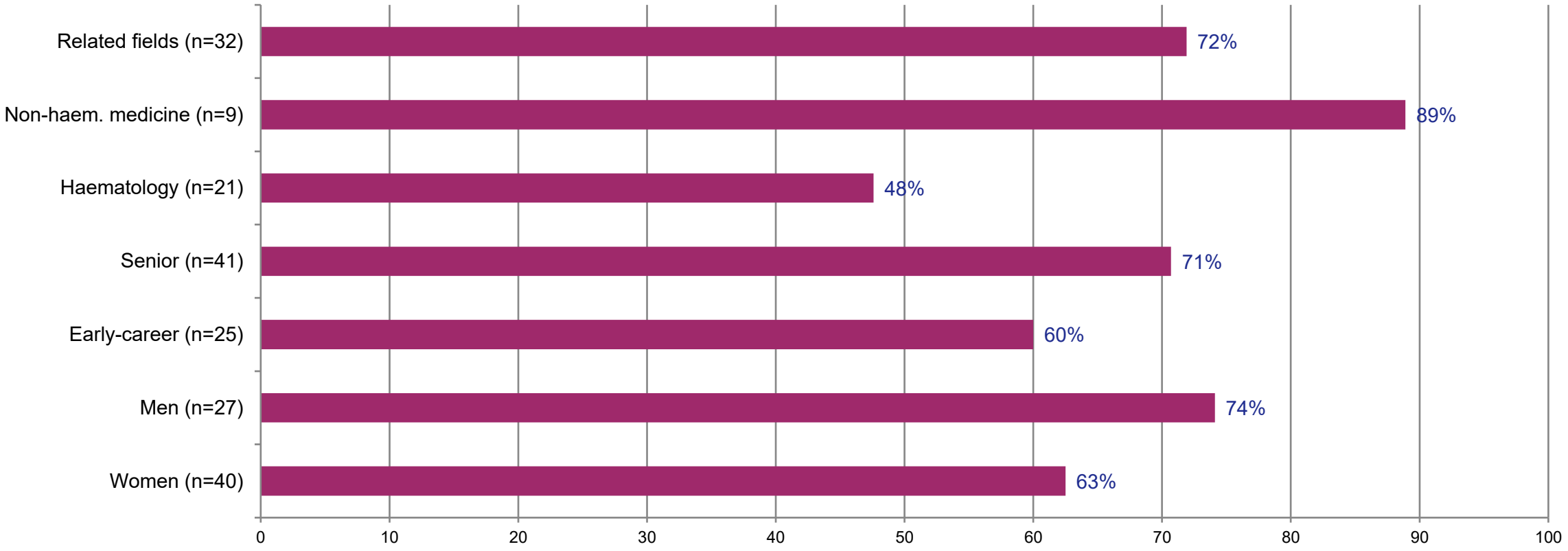
"In your field, career advancement opportunities are equally available to women and men."



Comment:

Two-thirds see equal opportunity overall — but as the next slide shows, that attitude is not shared evenly across gender, career stage, or field.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT: VIEWS DIFFER BY GROUP



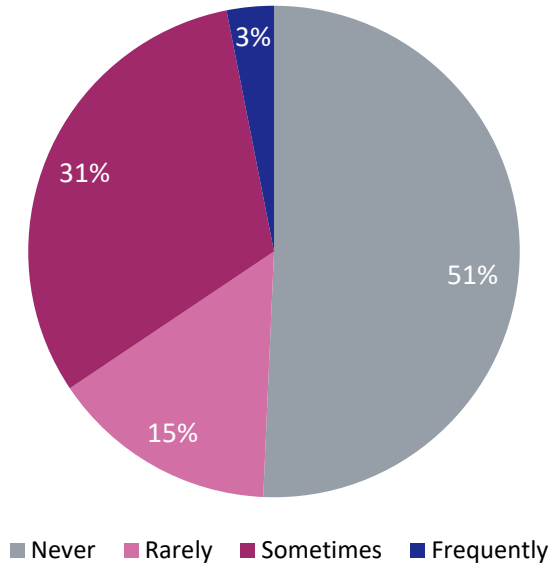
Share who agree/strongly agree that career advancement is equally available to women and men, by respondent group.

CAREER OPPORTUNiTIES

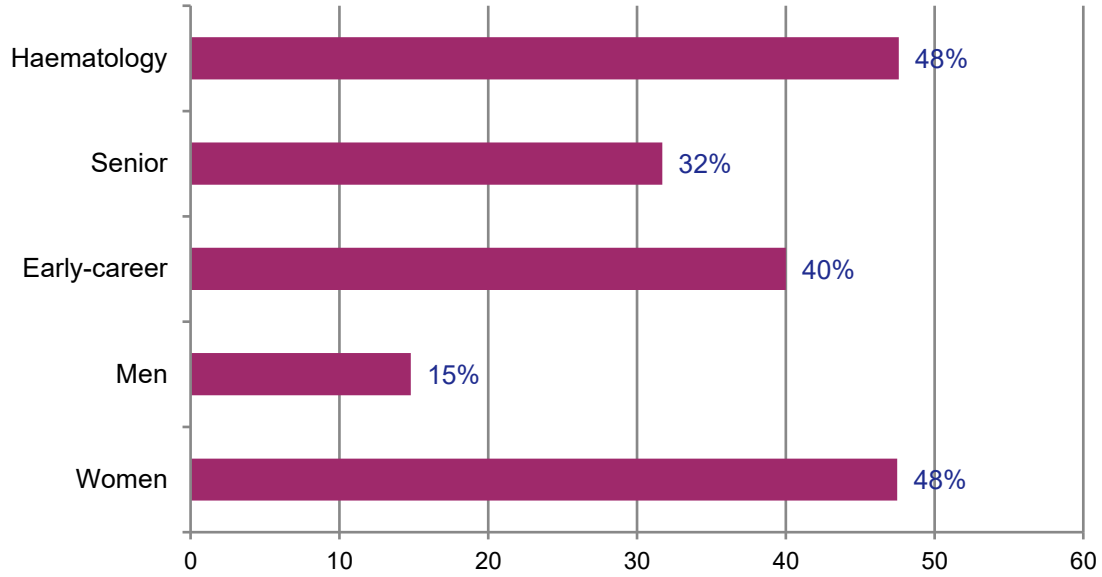
Statements	Gender	Yes	Partly	Not enough information to judge	No	Sig.
Women are adequately represented among research group leaders in haematology and rare disease research in	Men	20	6	0	1	**0.007***
	Women	15	12	11	2	
Women are adequately represented among principal investigators in haematology and rare diseases in general in	Men	18	6	1	2	**0.010***
	Women	12	10	12	6	
Women are adequately represented among keynote speakers at haematology conferences	Men	19	6	2	0	**0.016***
	Women	16	7	12	5	

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF GENDER BARRIERS

OVERALL (n=67)



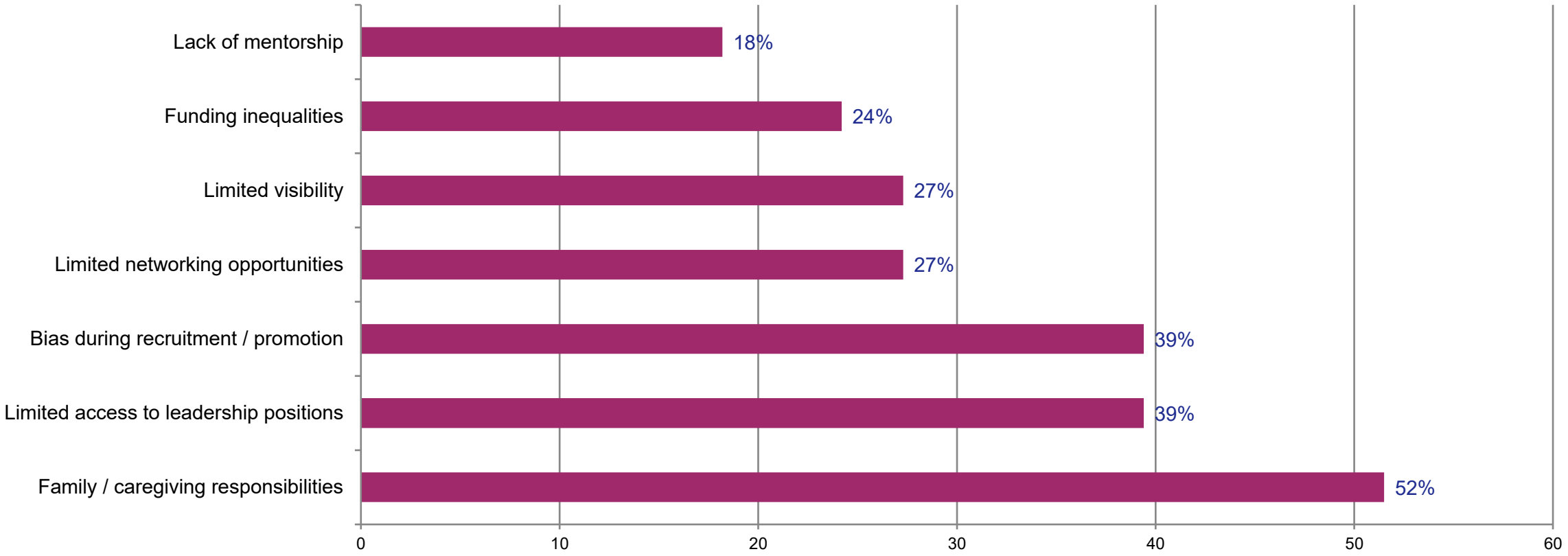
"FREQUENTLY / SOMETIMES" BY GROUP



Comment:

About half of all respondents report experiencing gender-related barriers at some point. That experience is far from evenly spread: women report it more than 3x as often as men, and haematology-field respondents report the high rate.

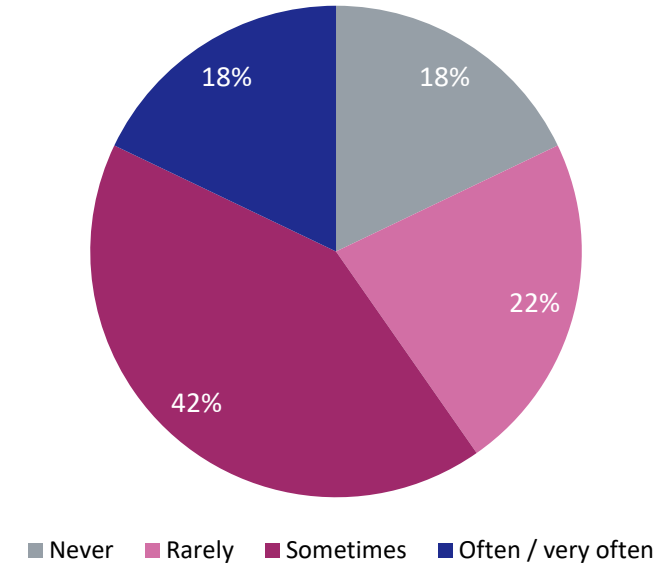
WHAT DO THOSE BARRIERS LOOK LIKE?



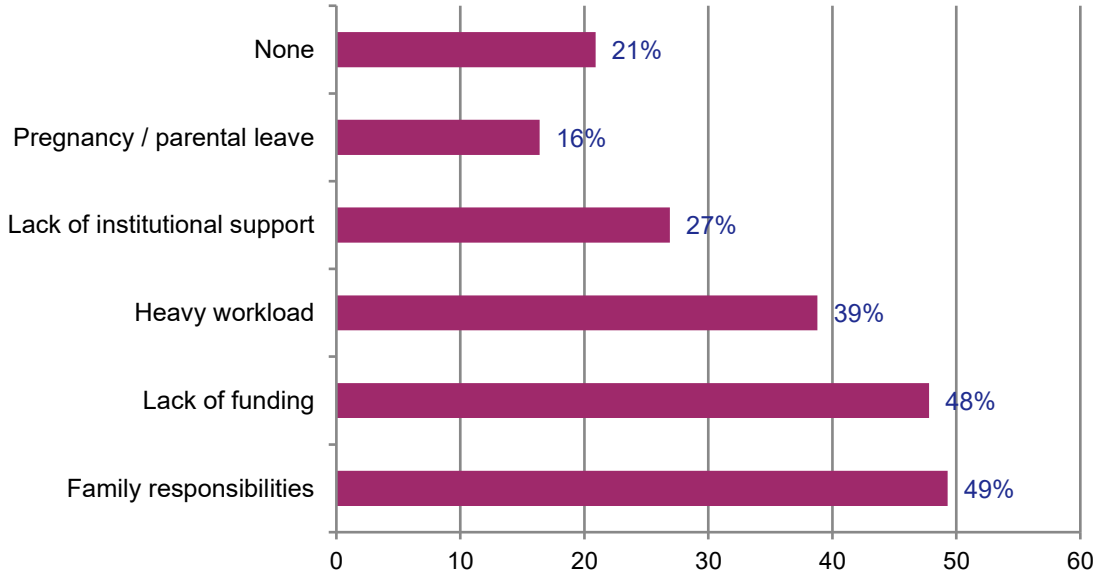
Among the 33 respondents who reported experiencing barriers (select up to 3).

CAREGIVING AND CAREER TRADE-OFFS

CAREGIVING LIMITS PARTICIPATION



REASONS FOR DECLINING AN INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITY



Comment:

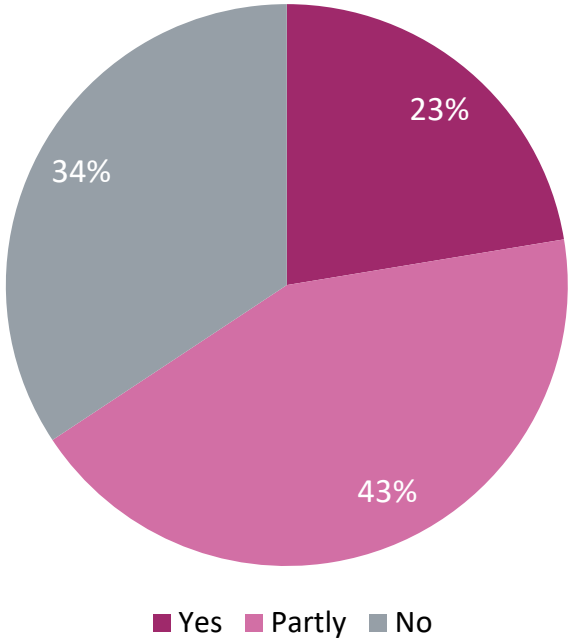
Caregiving was reported as often limitation for 18% of respondens. The most common reason (49%) for declining an international opportunity is family responsibilities— narrowly ahead of funding gaps. So, some kind of flexible formats and dependent-care support at meetings would directly address this.

REPRESENTATION WITHIN OUR Neutro-NARPS NETWORK

Statement	Gender	Yes	Partly	Not enough information to judge	No	Sig.
Women are adequately represented among Working Group Leaders in Neutro-NARPS	Men	22	3	2	0	0.417
	Women	27	4	8	1	
Women are adequately represented among Management Committee members in Neutro-NARPS.	Men	21	3	2	1	0.538
	Women	26	4	8	2	
Women are adequately represented among Core Group members in Neutro-NARPS	Men	21	3	2	1	0.136
	Women	26	1	10	3	
Women are adequately represented among grant holders in Neutro-NARPS	Men	19	4	3	1	0.103
	Women	18	5	15	2	
Women are adequately represented among Training School trainers in Neutro-NARPS	Men	20	5	1	1	0.067

Share saying representation is adequate ("Yes"), by gender. Differences are not statistically significant (p>0.05 on all five items) — Table DEI, Neutro-NARPS.

PROTECTED TIME FOR RESEARCH

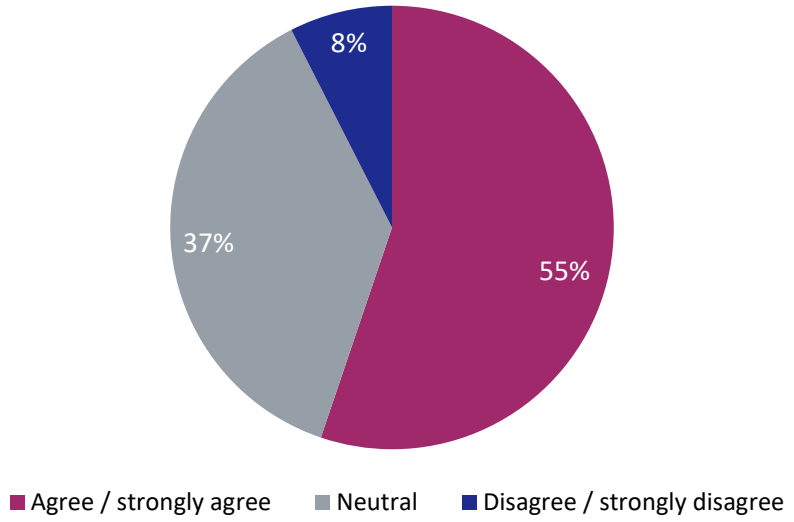


Comment:

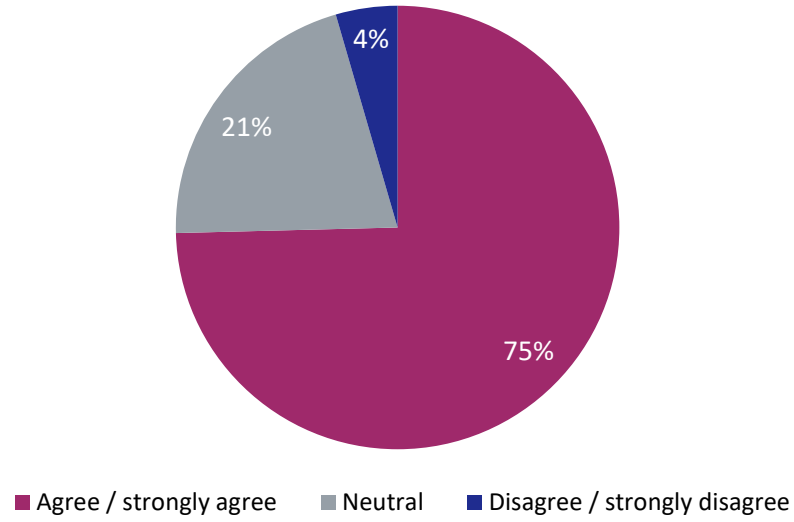
Only 1 in 5 members has fully protected research time, and over a third has none at all — a structural constraint that limits engagement with the Action regardless of gender or seniority.

DOES EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPROVE SCIENCE?

GENDER EQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP WOULD IMPROVE RESEARCH AND PATIENT CARE



GREATER DIVERSITY IN RESEARCH TEAMS IMPROVES INNOVATION AND PATIENT OUTCOMES



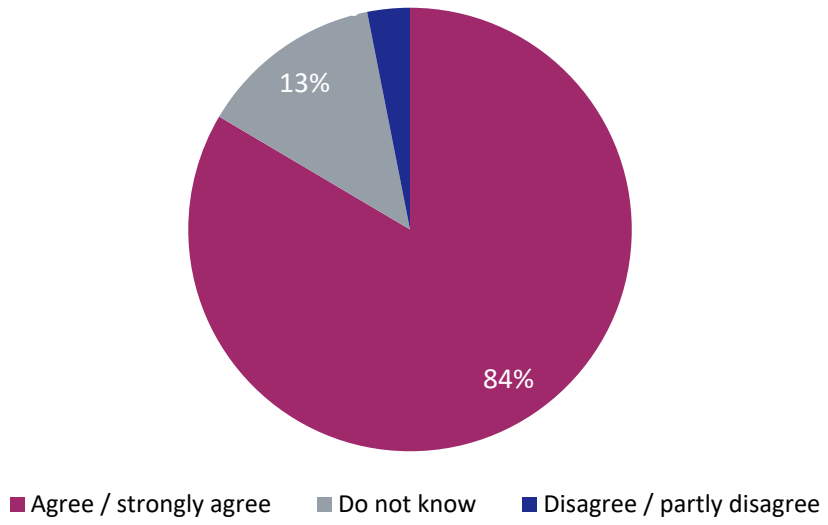
Comment:

Consensus is strongest on diversity's scientific value (75% agree) — the belief that gender equality specifically improves outcomes is softer (55%), suggesting a communication opportunity, not a disagreement.

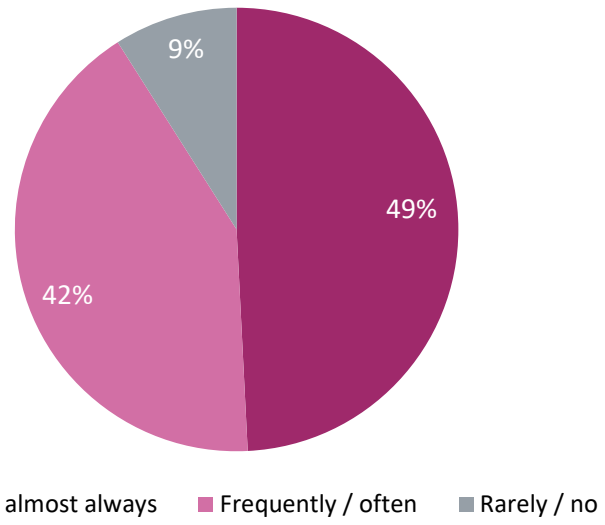
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BELONGING WITHIN NEUTRO-NARPS

"MY CONTRIBUTIONS WILL RECEIVE EQUAL RECOGNITION REGARDLESS OF GENDER"



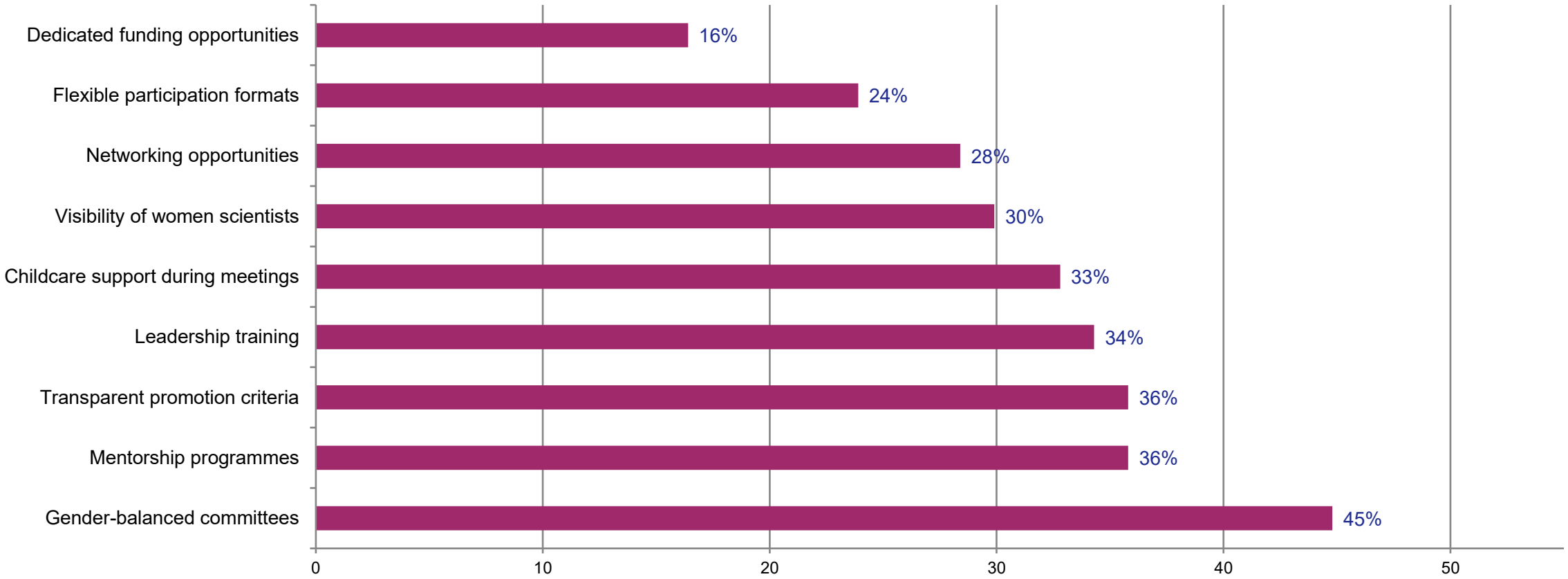
FEEL EQUALLY INCLUDED IN INTERNATIONAL INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS



Comment:

Day-to-day life inside Neutro-NARPS scores far higher than perceptions of the wider field: 9 in 10 feel included in collaborations and over 4 in 5 trust their contributions are recognised fairly. The Action's internal culture is a genuine strength to build on.

WHAT WOULD HELP MOST?



Which actions would most improve gender equality in international research networks? (n=67, select up to 3)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Strong foundation: members feel included day-to-day and trust their work is recognised fairly inside Neutro-NARPS — the internal culture is a real asset.
- The main gap is lack of protected time for research
- Perception gaps widen outside the Action: representation looks fair inside Neutro-NARPS, but decreases for leader roles across the wider field.
- There is clear, converging demand for solutions: gender-balanced committees, mentorships, and transparent promotion criteria are on the top of the list.

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https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1zr1k0SOq6XJ90G-9I7LHKuY86WXRgIzdWLTH6a3bxxI/edit



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Krakov, Sep 2026

Thank you!

Neutro-NARPS DEI Team:

Anna Hovhannisyan, Aleksandra Catic Dordevic

Marije Bartles, Jelena Roganovic, Victor Tomacinchii, Natalia Alejandra Borbaran Bravo

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