

NOMINEE 1

OLGA MOLINA TOMEY

DIRECTOR OF CEC BRUSSELS, ADVOCATE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Olga Molina Tomey is a Spanish advocate for gender equality and inclusive leadership, currently serving as the Director of the Brussels Office of the Confederation of European Managers (CEC). Her work focuses on empowering women and promoting inclusivity at the highest levels of European leadership. As part of her role, Olga represents CEC on the European Commission's Advisory Committee on Equality between Men and Women, and she has been instrumental in establishing CEC's Working Group on Gender Equality and Inclusive Leadership.

Olga's key achievement is leading the Beyond Unconscious Bias (BEYUNBI) project, an EU-funded initiative aimed at overcoming unconscious bias in leadership positions. She has developed and piloted training programs across Europe, educating over 60 managers in cities like Paris, Rome, and Copenhagen. These efforts have contributed to creating more inclusive work environments and promoting gender equality in leadership roles. With a background in policy analysis and strategic communication, Olga continues to shape key discussions on social affairs and inclusion at European level.

HIGHLIGHTS: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP, GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

NOMINEE 2

ROMINA POURMOKHTARI

SWEDEN'S MINISTER FOR CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT, ADVOCATE FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

Romina Pourmokhtari is a Swedish politician and environmental advocate who made history as the youngest person to serve as Sweden's Minister for Climate and Environment at just 26 years old. Her swift rise to this position is a testament to her dedication to addressing climate change and advancing sustainable development. Romina has been a vocal proponent of stronger climate policies, pushing for a transition to renewable energy and a reduction in carbon emissions, placing Sweden at the forefront of global climate efforts.

Before her ministerial role, Romina served as chair of the Liberal Youth of Sweden, where she championed youth participation in politics and encouraged young people to take an active role in shaping policy. Her work bridges the gap between climate action, youth involvement, and gender equality, inspiring young women across Europe to pursue leadership roles in public service and environmental advocacy. Romina's leadership and her advocacy for inclusive policymaking reflect the values of progress and sustainability, making her an influential figure on both national and European stages.

HIGHLIGHTS: CLIMATE ACTION, YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

NOMINEE 3

CAMILLE ETIENNE

FRENCH ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST AND ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECOLOGY

Camille Etienne is a prominent French environmental activist known for her tireless efforts to address the pressing environmental and public health issue of PFAS, also known as "forever chemicals." Her strategic approach, which combines grassroots mobilisation, advocacy, and a strong media presence, has played a crucial role in raising public awareness about the harmful effects of PFAS. Through her campaigning, she has successfully transformed this issue into a national public health concern in France, engaging stakeholders from trade unions to policymakers.

Camille is also the founder of Avant L'Orage, a collective that merges art and ecology to inspire youth action on environmental crises. Her documentary "Toxic Bodies", which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival during Green Week, highlights the dangers of PFAS and follows the journey of citizens, scientists, and investigative journalists fighting for a safer environment. Her activism culminated in the unanimous adoption of a PFAS ban by the French Parliament, marking a major victory for environmental protection and public health. Camille is currently spending a year in the UK, collaborating with researchers and activists to elevate this issue to the European level.

HIGHLIGHTS: GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM, ADVOCACY, CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

NOMINEE 4

ANJA PRESNUKHINA

CHAIR OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN YOUTH, ADVOCATE FOR INCLUSIVITY AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Anja Presnukhina, a Finnish-Russian political leader, serves as the Chair of the European Green Youth, where she advocates for inclusivity and active political engagement across Europe. Her election to this influential position marks a significant achievement, as she aims to demonstrate that a person's background should not be a barrier to participation in social and political discourse. Through her leadership, Anja inspires young people from diverse backgrounds to engage in political processes and champion progressive values.

Anja has been outspoken in her condemnation of authoritarian regimes, particularly distancing herself from the oppressive policies of Vladimir Putin. She continues to use her platform to push for more inclusive and open dialogues, emphasising that personal heritage should not define one's opinions or involvement in society. Anja's commitment to fostering an inclusive political environment makes her a powerful voice for youth engagement in Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS: CLIMATE ACTION, YOUTH ENGAGEMENT, INCLUSIVITY, COMBATING AUTHORITARIANISM

NOMINEE 5

ABEBA BIRHANE

COGNITIVE SCIENTIST, ADVOCATE FOR ETHICAL AI, AND SENIOR ADVISOR AT MOZILLA FOUNDATION

Dr. Abeba Birhane is a cognitive scientist and a leading advocate for ethical practices in artificial intelligence (AI). As a Senior Advisor in AI Accountability at Mozilla Foundation and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Trinity College Dublin, she has made significant contributions to highlighting the biases and ethical concerns within data-scraping and AI algorithms. Her work pushes for inclusive technological solutions that address the needs of marginalised communities, aligning with the EU's commitment to fairness and equity in digital innovation.

Dr. Birhane's research has raised awareness about the societal risks posed by AI systems, particularly in relation to bias, discrimination, and the misuse of facial recognition technology. Her 2020 study led to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) deleting a widely used image database that had been found to contain racist and misogynistic labels. Named one of TIME Magazine's 100 most influential people in AI in 2023, Dr. Birhane continues to advocate for responsible AI development that prioritises ethical oversight and inclusivity.

HIGHLIGHTS: AI ETHICS & ACCOUNTABILITY, INCLUSIVE TECHNOLOGIES

NOMINEE 6

AÏSSATOU CISSÉ

DISTRICT ALDERMAN, ADVOCATE FOR DIVERSITY AND YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS

Aïssatou Cissé is a trailblazing politician and activist, recognised as the first Black and youngest district alderwoman in Flanders, Belgium. Representing the district of Borgerhout, Aïssatou has used her platform to address issues of inequality and discrimination, promoting diversity and inclusivity at both the local and European levels. Her work amplifies the voices of young people and Afro-Belgians, advocating for social justice and tackling systemic challenges in post-colonial European societies.

Starting her political journey at the age of 16, Aïssatou joined the Belgian Socialist Party with a strong commitment to social justice. By 19, she was elected as a council member in Borgerhout, and at 21, she became district alderwoman, representing 47,000 residents. In addition to her political role, Aïssatou is an ambassador for DiasporaVote, a European civil society organisation that promotes the participation of diaspora youth in political processes. She is currently standing for election in the Belgian local elections in October 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS: DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

NOMINEE 7

HANNA VEILER

PRESIDENT OF THE JEWISH STUDENT UNION OF GERMANY, ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND JEWISH IDENTITY

Hanna Veiler is a dedicated advocate for women's empowerment and Jewish identity, currently serving as the volunteer president of the Jewish Student Union of Germany (JSUD). Born in 1998 in Vitebsk, Belarus, and raised in a post-Soviet context, Hanna's migration to Germany as part of a Jewish quota refugee family has profoundly influenced her commitment to democracy and self-determination. As the first in her family to openly practice Judaism and participate in free elections, she strives to promote inclusivity and representation within the Jewish community.

Hanna is actively involved in organising significant events such as the Jewish Women Empowerment Summit*, which highlights the importance of women's perspectives in Jewish life. As vice president of the European Union of Jewish Students (EUJS), she works to strengthen Jewish self-organisation and democratic structures across Europe, with a focus on Eastern Europe. A sought-after expert on antisemitism and remembrance culture, Hanna uses her social media platforms and collaborations with media outlets to raise awareness about the concerns of young Jewish people. Her commitment to human rights is also evident in her support for victims of sexual violence and her advocacy for Ukrainian refugees.

HIGHLIGHTS: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, JEWISH IDENTITY, COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

NOMINEE 8

TEODORA RISTESKA DASKALOVSKI

ADVOCATE FOR STEM EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY, MEMBER OF THE GLOBAL FUND FOR WOMEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Teodora Risteska Daskalovski is a passionate advocate for women's rights and education in North Macedonia. As a member of the Advisory Council of the Global Fund for Women, she works to promote gender equality and empower women. Teodora is also the lead coordinator of the Robotics Educational Outreach Program (REOP), an initiative dedicated to providing free STEM and robotics education to public school students in North Macedonia.

Through REOP, Teodora aims to inspire the next generation of innovators and engineers, particularly encouraging young girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Her commitment to enhancing educational opportunities reflects her belief in the importance of inclusive and equitable access to STEM fields, which is crucial for fostering diversity in these industries.

HIGHLIGHTS: STEM, GENDER EQUALITY

NOMINEE 9

MAJA KRIŠTAFOR

FOUNDER OF INKLUZIV COLLECTIVE, CROATIA'S FIRST DEI CONSULTANCY, ADVOCATE FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND ONLINE SAFETY

Maja Krištafor is a Croatian activist and entrepreneur, recognised as the founder of Inkluziv Collective, Croatia's first DEI consultancy. Her work focuses on combatting sexism and promoting gender equality across various platforms. Maja is actively involved in two organisations dedicated to addressing online harassment and fostering a safer digital environment for women.

A notable achievement in Maja's advocacy is her leadership in the campaign to criminalise the non-consensual dissemination of sexual images, commonly referred to as revenge porn, in Croatia. This campaign has raised awareness about the importance of consent and the need for legal protections against such violations. Additionally, she pioneered a project that successfully secured 20,000 free menstrual products for university students in Zagreb, addressing period poverty and promoting menstrual equity.

HIGHLIGHTS: DEI, GENDER EQUALITY, ONLINE SAFETY

NOMINEE 10

HUSNA JALAL

AFGHAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND DIRECTOR OF WOMEN FOR CHANGE INTERNATIONAL

Husna Jalal is a dedicated Afghan women's rights activist and researcher based in the Netherlands, committed to advancing the civil and political rights of Afghan women. As the director of Women for Change International, Husna has played a vital role in amplifying the voices of Afghan women, both in Afghanistan and the diaspora. Her work focuses on advocating for gender equality and empowering women to take active roles in society.

In addition to her leadership at Women for Change International, Husna is a co-founder of the Freedom Message Newspaper in Afghanistan, where she has been instrumental in providing a platform for women's voices and issues. Through her activism and research, she highlights the challenges faced by Afghan women, advocating for their rights and pushing for meaningful change. Husna's unwavering dedication to improving the lives of women in Afghanistan makes her a significant figure in the global movement for gender equality.

HIGHLIGHTS: IMMIGRANT RIGHTS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY