

EWORA 2025 Lisbon Conference Report

Theme: *Gender Equality in the Academy is Fragile: Is Values-Led Leadership the Answer?*

Date: 26–27 June 2025

Venue: Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP), Lisbon, Portugal

A highlight video capturing key moments of the EWORA 2025 Lisbon Conference has been made available on the EWORA YouTube channel and may be accessed here:

Link: <https://youtu.be/zvFOgTsPwfA>

Introduction

The European Women Rectors Association (EWORA) convened its 2025 Conference, titled “*Gender Equality in the Academy is Fragile: Is Values-Led Leadership the Answer?*”, on 26–27 June 2025 at Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP), Lisbon. This high-level gathering brought together rectors, vice-rectors, senior academic leaders, researchers, and policy experts from across Europe to critically examine how fragile recent gains in gender equality remain and to explore the transformative potential of values-led leadership in building sustainable and inclusive academic environments.

In an era characterized by social polarization, political retrenchment, and rapid technological disruption, the conference provided a timely platform to interrogate persistent challenges, share institutional strategies, and inspire concrete action that advances inclusive leadership at all levels of higher education.

Importantly, the event drew on the newly released [EWORA Position Paper 2025](#), authored by Prof. Kerstin Tham and Prof. Pamela Gillies. The paper emphasizes the critical role of values-led leadership in fostering equitable environments, calls for strengthened gender equality policies, and outlines a framework to create sustainable leadership pathways for women in higher education. It served as both a reflection of progress and a powerful call to strategic transformation.

Over two days, participants engaged in five dynamic sessions that explored:

- Securing and Sustaining Women’s Leadership in Higher Education
- How to Narrow the Gender Disparity in Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- How Can We Promote Senior Academic Leadership amongst Women and Why Is It Important?
- Breaking the Fragility Circle: Is Values-Led Leadership a Path to Strengthening Gender Equality in Academia?
- Looking Ahead in Difficult Times: Conference Wrap-up and Closing Remarks

The conference culminated in a celebratory *Honorary Award Ceremony*, where Prof. Manuela Veloso was honored for her pioneering contributions to artificial intelligence and her inspirational leadership in academia.

This report presents a summary of each session, capturing key messages, strategic recommendations, and the collective commitment of EWORA members and partners to continue shaping a more equitable, inclusive, and forward-looking academic landscape.

Opening Remarks

13:15 – 14:00, June 26, 2025

Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP), Lisbon – Auditorium 1

Moderator: Maria Inês Romba, Head of the Office of Development and Media Relations, UCP

Speakers:

Prof. Isabel Gil, Rector, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal

Prof. Kerstin Tham, President, EWORA & Former Vice-Chancellor, Malmö University, Sweden

Dr. Arne Flåøyen, President, NordForsk, Norway

Key messages

The conference was officially opened with welcoming remarks that set a powerful tone for the two-day event. Moderator Maria Inês Romba greeted participants on behalf of UCP and highlighted the university's commitment to dialogue, inclusion, and academic excellence — values deeply aligned with the goals of the conference.

Prof. Isabel Gil, as Rector of the host institution, delivered a compelling welcome. She addressed the growing urgency to defend and advance gender equality in academia at a time when democratic values and shared governance structures are increasingly under pressure. She urged the academic community to root leadership practices in ethics, courage, and collective responsibility, framing values-led leadership as both an institutional necessity and a moral imperative.

Prof. Kerstin Tham, President of EWORA, reflected on the fragile state of gender equality in higher education. Despite decades of progress, leadership positions in academia remain predominantly occupied by men. She called for a shift towards inclusive, human-centered leadership underpinned by values such as transparency, empathy, solidarity, and integrity. Prof. Tham stressed the importance of networks like EWORA in sustaining international momentum and providing intergenerational support to women in academic leadership.

Dr. Arne Flåøyen, President of NordForsk, offered a Nordic perspective. While acknowledging progress made through policy and institutional reform in the Nordic region, he underlined that structural and cultural barriers to gender equality persist. He commended EWORA's continued

leadership and affirmed NordForsk's support for inclusive governance and cross-border collaboration in research and higher education.

Together, the opening remarks positioned the conference as a space for both celebration and reflection — a moment to honor progress and galvanize action to protect and extend gender equality in academic leadership.

Session 1: Securing and Sustaining Women's Leadership in Higher Education

Date: June 26, 2025

Time: 14:00 – 15:30

Moderator: Prof. Isabel Gil, Rector, Universidade Católica Portuguesa

Panelists:

Prof. Kerstin Tham, President, EWORA & Former Vice-Chancellor, Malmö University, Sweden

Prof. Pamela Gillies, Former Vice-Chancellor, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK

Prof. Eva Martha Eckkrammer, President, Trier University, Germany

Prof. Elvira Fortunato, Professor of Materials Science Department, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal

Session Overview

Session 1 was designed to offer unique insight and practical guidance on the promotion of senior academic leadership development, with academic and democratic values, human rights, and social impact placed at the core of the proposition. The prevailing and persistent gender gap in senior leadership, research, and institutional decision-making across universities in Europe and beyond was underscored, as few would argue against the need for its closure. Approaches through which female leadership in Higher Education can be secured and sustained were discussed.

Key messages

Prof. Kerstin Tham

Prof. Tham opened by reflecting on her leadership journey and the fragility of institutional progress. She emphasized that gender equality in academia is not linear, and that previous gains can quickly be lost without strategic leadership embedded in shared values. She warned against complacency, especially in countries where gender policies appear robust on the surface but are not well implemented.

Her intervention drew attention to the disconnect between institutional policy frameworks and actual academic leadership pipelines. She stressed the need for resilience in values-led leadership integrating academic values and democratic principles and called for better alignment between gender equality efforts and governance cultures in academia.

Prof. Pamela Gillies

Prof. Gillies focused on the role of intergenerational mentoring, noting that senior women leaders must serve as visible role models and bridge-builders across generations. She emphasized the value of storytelling and relational leadership, recounting her own experiences navigating political and institutional change.

She argued for greater recognition of emotional intelligence, relational networks, and compassion as forms of academic leadership often overlooked in traditional metrics. Her remarks strongly reinforced the importance of solidarity and coalition-building within and across universities.

Prof. Eva Martha Eckkrammer

Prof. Eckkrammer shared an institutional perspective from Germany, highlighting how different governance models (e.g. centralized vs. collegial) affect the uptake and implementation of gender equality plans. She pointed to the urgent need to embed gender goals not just in HR policies but in core strategic planning, with clear accountability frameworks.

She noted that many institutions fail to operationalize equality plans, treating them as standalone exercises instead of systemic transformations. She recommended greater integration of gender equality into accreditation and quality assurance systems at national and EU levels.

Prof. Elvira Fortunato

As both a senior academic and a government minister, Prof. Fortunato offered a policy-level perspective. She acknowledged the progress made in Portugal in increasing female participation in science and education but pointed out that leadership positions still reflect deep-seated gender gaps. She called for national and EU-level funding mechanisms to require strong gender mainstreaming, especially in research and innovation funding.

She emphasized that universities must lead by example in aligning their research values with social responsibility and suggested that leadership development programs should address both technical and ethical dimensions of governance.

Recommendations

- Establish long-term institutional mentoring programs connecting early-career women to senior leaders.
- Ensure gender equality plans are tied to institutional strategy and accountability frameworks.
- Promote a shift in how leadership is defined and measured, valuing relational and ethical leadership.
- Encourage gender criteria in national and EU funding schemes, especially in research and innovation.
- Integrate equality metrics into university accreditation and audit systems to ensure implementation.

Session 2: How to Narrow the Gender Disparity in Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Date: June 26, 2025

Time: 15:45 – 17:15

Moderator: Prof. Sondan D. Feyiz, Rector, Kadir Has University (Vice President, EWORA)

Panelists:

Prof. Eva Åkesson, Former Vice Chancellor, Uppsala University, Sweden

Prof. Lucyna Woźniak, Vice Rector, Medical University of Łódź, Poland

Federica Rosetta, Vice President Academic and Public Affairs EMEA, Elsevier, Netherlands

Prof. Vanesa Daza, Vice-Rector, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain

Session Overview

AI was described as a development that will completely change the way work and communication are carried out both inside and outside academia. These shifts were identified as presenting major challenges for management and for female leadership. In Session 2, the need for careful consideration of the impact of AI and of the gender imbalance in its use was emphasised. It was noted that such imbalance could lead to the exacerbation of biases embedded in AI systems and to limitations in innovation, thereby indicating that the development of leadership strategies in higher education is required.

Key messages

Eva Åkesson

Prof. Åkesson framed the discussion around the intersection of academic leadership and technological acceleration, emphasizing that many academic institutions remain insufficiently equipped to grapple with the ethical, pedagogical, and gendered implications of artificial intelligence. She called for proactive strategies that embed inclusive values at the core of digital transformation within higher education. She called for robust frameworks in academia that foster ethically sound and inclusive AI research and emphasized the importance of cross-border collaboration and institutional reflexivity in adapting to AI's rapid evolution.

Lucyna Woźniak

Prof. Woźniak brought a medical perspective and highlighted the underrepresentation of women not only in AI, but across the academic leadership in STEM and medical sciences. She mentioned that in the Polish Academy of Sciences, women face barriers in climbing leadership hierarchies, particularly in disciplines like medicine.

She acknowledged the potential of AI to boost women's representation if access to data and research opportunities are made fairer. However, she also noted that many women feel

unprepared or uninvited to pursue leadership roles in AI.

She stressed the need for mentoring and coaching systems and suggested that inclusive leadership programs should embed AI training from early stages.

Federica Rosetta

Representing Elsevier, Federica Rosetta emphasized the urgent need for disaggregated gender data in AI research and publication patterns. She shared insights from Elsevier's recent data-driven studies showing a persistent gender gap in AI-related fields across Europe.

She called on universities to institutionalize gender-responsive data collection practices and warned that without diverse data, AI systems risk amplifying existing biases. She also noted the importance of funding and editorial policies that actively encourage diversity in AI research teams.

Vanesa Daza

Prof. Daza, a cryptographer and senior leader in computer science, shared personal insights into navigating the AI landscape as a woman. She noted that technical fields like cybersecurity and AI remain exclusionary and often resist inclusive governance models.

She argued for the creation of supportive environments in AI-focused departments and stressed the importance of targeted leadership initiatives that bring women into top-level decision-making roles in AI research and strategy.

Recommendations

- Launch gender-sensitive AI training within university leadership programs.
- Promote inclusive research environments that elevate underrepresented voices in AI.
- Require gender-disaggregated data collection in all AI-related publications and grant reporting.
- Encourage AI ethics boards in universities to include women and minority experts.
- Fund initiatives that support mentorship and coaching for women in AI research.

Session 3: How Can We Promote Senior Academic Leadership Amongst Women and Why Is It Important?

Date: June 27, 2025

Time: 09:00 – 10:30

Moderator: Prof. Pamela Gillies, Former Vice-Chancellor, Glasgow Caledonian University

Panelists:

Prof. Pamela Habibović, Rector Magnificus, Maastricht University, Netherlands

Assoc. Prof. Elif Nur Fırat Karalar, Koç University, Türkiye

Prof. Devorah Lieberman, Former President, University of La Verne, IAUP Representative, USA

Prof. Paulo Jorge Ferreira, Rector, University of Aveiro, Portugal

Session Overview

A gender gap is still observed in leadership positions, in research, and in general decision-making at universities in Europe. In light of current political developments, it is recognised that previous achievements may even be jeopardised. In this session, the ways in which gender parity can be advanced, the barriers that are encountered, and the reasons why this goal is considered essential for universities, colleges, and research organisations were examined.

Key messages

Prof. Pamela Habibović

Prof. Habibović reflected on her leadership at Maastricht, one of the most internationally oriented universities in the Netherlands. She emphasized that diversity goals must go beyond numbers to include a sense of belonging and power-sharing. She raised concerns about the performance-driven and competitive environments in academia that often disadvantage women.

Her key message was the importance of "creating space rather than occupying space" reminding the audience that leadership must be enabling, collaborative, and values-driven. She also highlighted the need for clear succession planning in academic leadership.

Assoc. Prof. Elif Nur Firat Karalar

As a molecular biologist with leadership experience in STEM, Dr. Karalar addressed the leaky pipeline in research careers. She shared her experience navigating male-dominated disciplines, and how even highly qualified women are often left out of decision-making processes and research strategy formulation.

She called for transparent evaluation systems, early career development programs with gender lenses, and intersectional approaches to mentorship. She also flagged the need to rethink research excellence criteria, which currently favor quantity over collaborative and impactful work.

Prof. Devorah Lieberman

Representing the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Prof. Lieberman framed the discussion in a global context. She spoke about the fragility of institutional memory in gender equality and how changes in leadership or political orientation can easily reverse progress.

She highlighted that in many countries, gender-focused programs are not structurally embedded, making them vulnerable to shifting priorities. She advocated for embedding gender equity into university charters, budgeting, and leadership recruitment processes.

She also encouraged the creation of global mentoring exchanges to support women across geopolitical divides, noting the value of shared learnings from Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe.

Prof. Paulo Jorge Ferreira

As a male university leader, Prof. Ferreira offered a strong allyship perspective. He acknowledged the responsibility of male leaders to actively sponsor and advocate for women's leadership. He shared his institution's actions on gender audits, promotion panels, and introducing gender-sensitive HR policies.

He emphasized that structural change cannot happen without strong top-down commitment and continuous bottom-up pressure. He also mentioned the importance of language and symbolic representation, including how academic rituals and imagery often invisibly perpetuate male-dominated ideals.

Recommendations

- Embed gender equality frameworks into institutional charters and financial planning processes.
- Expand leadership development programs that include coaching, networking, and sponsorship for women.
- Rethink the criteria for academic excellence to include collaborative, interdisciplinary, and impact-oriented work.
- Promote international knowledge exchange on gender strategies through global networks.
- Institutionalize allyship programs where male leaders take active responsibility in sponsoring women.
- Monitor and publish gender-disaggregated data across leadership levels and committees.

Session 4: Breaking the Fragility Circle: Is Values-Led Leadership a Path to Strengthening Gender Equality in Academia?

Date: June 27, 2025

Time: 11:00 – 12:30

Moderator: Prof. Inga Žalėnienė, Rector, Mykolas Romeris University

Panelists:

David Lock, Secretary General, Magna Charta Observatory, UK

Prof. Mia Rönnmar, Vice-Chancellor, Malmö University, Sweden

Prof. Hermínia Vasconcelos Vilar, Rector, University of Évora, Portugal

Expert Discussant: Prof. Caroline Parker, Emeritus Professor, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK

Session Overview

Session 4 was focused on the fact that the position of female academic leadership is consistently regarded as fragile. Although research has shown that women leaders are critical to the development of universities, beyond issues of fairness or social justice, evidence has been

presented that gender equality in leadership positions brings several benefits: improved decision-making and the adoption of values-led strategies that prioritise inclusivity and introduce service-oriented approaches to communities.

Key messages

David Lock

David Lock introduced the *Living Values Project*, developed by the Magna Charta Observatory, which encourages universities to define and live by their core institutional values. He stressed that values should not remain abstract declarations but serve as actionable principles guiding leadership, governance, and learning.

He emphasized the importance of aligning leadership with institutional values to build trust, support gender equality, and address societal challenges. Lock called on universities to engage stakeholders, develop leadership capacity, and integrate values into everyday practices. He concluded by highlighting the need for all members of an institution to clearly articulate and embody its unique values.

Lock argued that universities should align with global challenges, including sustainability and equality, not only in rhetoric but through micro-structural changes. A key takeaway from his remarks was the responsibility of leaders at all levels to champion ethical governance, stating that data and values must drive action—not just institutional missions or external reports.

He concluded by questioning our complacency: “We are used to engaging with the mission and the community—but are we equipped to detect the unique values that define our institutions in action?”

Prof. Mia Rönmar

Representing Malmö University and contributing notes from the ILERA World Congress, Prof. Rönmar focused on the interplay between labour rights, gender equality goals, and university policy. She advocated for research-based policymaking, noting that deep academic research and evidence exchange are critical tools to design sustainable gender equality measures.

She emphasized the role of academic freedom and decent work in achieving fundamental rights, especially in teaching and research careers. Best practice sharing, comparative models, and collaborative alliances across Europe and globally were her top recommendations.

Her key message: *"We can't fix inequality in the academy if we don't start from within the academy—with research, evidence, and policy intertwined."*

Prof. Hermínia Vasconcelos Vilar

As Rector of the University of Évora, Prof. Vilar brought a national and institutional lens. She reminded the audience that women's leadership remains fragile in both symbolic and statistical

terms—not only in Portugal but across Europe. In Portugal, only about 25% of full professors are women, and women remain underrepresented in decision-making bodies.

She asked provocative questions about intergenerational tensions, where younger women may appear to have opportunities, but structural and cultural barriers remain. “What do we do when equality seems to exist on paper, but does not translate into power?”

She also highlighted the importance of platforms like EWORA, saying, “Évora is a place of expression. EWORA is a coalition of voices. Let us use it to confront fragility together.”

Prof. Caroline Parker (Discussant)

Prof. Parker synthesized the key arguments and issued a clear call to action:

Fragility must not become a permanent feature of women’s leadership.

Values-led leadership requires embedded structures, not inspirational rhetoric alone. Ethical governance includes transparency, access to leadership, and institutional support systems.

She emphasized that transformative leadership must be taught, mentored, and continuously redefined, especially in the context of technological change, AI, and ethical responsibility.

Recommendations

- Universities must go beyond equality policies to adopt institution-specific “unique values frameworks”, grounded in ethics, equity, and inclusive governance.
- Embed equality targets in budgeting, hiring, curriculum, and promotion systems.
- Promote research-informed decision-making in all gender equality strategies.
- Develop national-level audits and collaborative platforms to monitor women’s representation in academic leadership.
- Launch intergenerational leadership exchanges to strengthen the visibility and pathways of younger women leaders.
- Expand mentorship programs with clear outcomes, sponsorship roles, and strategic tracking.

Session 5: Looking Ahead in Difficult Times – Conference Wrap-up and Closing Reflections

The final session of the conference brought together the EWORA Board of Directors in a moment of collective reflection, strategy, and renewal. Moderated by Prof. Birgitt Riegraf, the wrap-up panel provided a rich synthesis of insights gained over the two-day event and set the tone for future EWORA action.

Key Reflections from EWORA Board Members

Prof. Lucyna Woźniak

Prof. Woźniak emphasized that inclusive leadership is essential for the future of academia. She called for institutions to unhook the full potential of women to create a forward-looking academic

landscape. Drawing from her background in medicine, she spoke about the role of digital health systems and data science in advancing gender-responsive innovation.

She praised EWORA for providing a safe and empowering platform for self-expression and affirmed the importance of mentorship programs to sustain female leadership. She also underlined that AI literacy and legal knowledge should be embedded in academic leadership training.

“We must build leadership ecosystems that are both ethically aware and technologically prepared. The science of impact begins with how we empower our institutions and people.”

Prof. Isabel Gil

Prof. Gil’s intervention focused on the ethical dimensions of leadership.

This simple yet powerful reminder grounded her broader reflections on the urgency of diversifying academic power structures and the necessity of mentoring the next generation. She encouraged participants to take younger colleagues seriously, to model values-led leadership, and to defend freedom of speech, which she identified as being increasingly under stress even in academic settings.

Gil also emphasized that academic networks are transformative tools and that EWORA's success is deeply tied to its ability to foster transnational cooperation.

Prof. Pamela Gillies

Prof. Gillies reiterated the need for strong, principled voices in higher education. She framed EWORA as a collective intelligence network that thrives on dialogue and courage. Referring to leadership as an act of courage, she shared her concern about funding cuts and the disappearance of institutions, making resilient and ethical leadership more important than ever.

She encouraged EWORA to boldly embrace its next steps, identifying it as a “free zone” for academic exchange and solidarity.

“Let’s dream bigger. We need to understand the impact of our leadership and shape future leaders—not competitors, but collaborators.”

Prof. Inga Žalėnienė

Prof. Žalėnienė synthesized the critical importance of shared leadership, international solidarity, and institutional support. She described EWORA’s ongoing evolution as both a beacon and a bridge—connecting experiences across Europe while advocating for new models of university governance rooted in gender justice and shared values.

Prof. Kerstin Tham

As EWORA President, Prof. Tham closed the panel with words of gratitude and a call to action. She reflected on the “fragility” invoked in the conference’s title and pointed out that fragility is not weakness—it is a sign of pressure of things that must be reshaped, protected, and strengthened.

She urged the community to recognize the cracks not as failures, but as places where light can arise—a metaphor she attributed to the resilience of women leaders in turbulent times.

Acknowledgement

Prof. Sondan Durukan Feyiz was unable to attend the final session due to travel commitments. Her contribution to the conference, particularly through her moderation of the session on AI, was formally acknowledged.

Common Themes and Closing Messages

- Mentorship remains central to shaping future academic leaders.
- Data matters—we must continue gathering data on gender equality and leadership impact.
- AI and law literacy are future cornerstones of leadership training.
- Transnational solidarity and networks are key to resilience.
- EWORA is not just a network, it is a platform for courageous transformation.

EWORA 2025 Honorary Award Ceremony

Date: June 27, 2025

Time: 20:00

Venue: Museu do Oriente, Lisbon

The conference concluded with an elegant evening celebration at the Museu do Oriente, where the EWORA 2025 Honorary Award for Excellence in Artificial Intelligence and Leadership in Academia was conferred upon Prof. Manuela Veloso.

Prof. Veloso is currently Head of AI Research at J.P. Morgan and Herbert A. Simon University Professor at Carnegie Mellon University. She was recognized not only for her pioneering scientific contributions to the field of artificial intelligence, but also for her visionary leadership in academia and her enduring advocacy for gender equality in science and technology.

Ceremony Highlights:

Welcome Remarks by **Prof. Isabel Gil**, Rector of Universidade Católica Portuguesa, who praised the collaborative spirit of the Lisbon conference and the importance of recognizing global role models in leadership.

Keynote Speech by **Carlos Moedas**, Mayor of Lisbon, who addressed the importance of ethical innovation, inclusion, and science diplomacy in shaping future societies.

Award Presentation by **Prof. Kerstin Tham**, President of EWORA, who highlighted Prof. Veloso's transformative impact on AI research, her mentorship of young female scholars, and her embodiment of EWORA's values.

Acceptance Speech by **Prof. Manuela Veloso**, who shared personal reflections on the evolution of AI, the challenges and responsibilities of leadership, and the necessity of cultivating diverse and interdisciplinary academic environments.

Prof. Veloso emphasized the urgent need to embed values such as transparency, equity, and ethics into the design and governance of AI systems. She spoke about her own academic journey, the importance of mentors, and the responsibility of institutions to invest in the potential of women scientists.

The evening concluded with a closing toast by Prof. Isabel Gil and Prof. Kerstin Tham, affirming EWORA's continued commitment to supporting inclusive leadership and celebrating excellence across all disciplines.

Conclusion

The EWORA Conference 2025, titled *"Gender Equality in the Academy is Fragile: Is Values-Led Leadership the Answer?"*, brought together distinguished rectors, university leaders, policy experts, and advocates from across Europe and beyond. Over two days of vibrant discussion and thoughtful reflection at Universidade Católica Portuguesa in Lisbon, participants collectively examined the structural and cultural barriers that continue to hinder gender equality in academia and explored the role of values-led leadership as a transformative response to these challenges.

The sessions revealed a shared recognition: while progress has been made in advancing women's representation in academic leadership, the journey is far from complete. Persistent gaps, emerging threats to academic freedom, the gendered impacts of artificial intelligence, and the unequal burden of care responsibilities all underscore the fragility of current achievements.

Key takeaways from the sessions included the urgent need for:

- Institutional commitment to inclusive academic leadership models, grounded in ethics, collaboration, and shared governance
- Mentoring and talent development programs to support women across academic career stages
- Strategic use of data to measure, monitor, and drive progress in gender equality
- Integrating gender perspectives in digital transformation and AI leadership strategies

- Cross-national collaboration and solidarity, particularly through networks like EWORA, to amplify impact and accelerate change.

The concluding session, led by the EWORA Board, powerfully reaffirmed the collective ambition to make EWORA not just a network but a catalyst for reimagining the academy. Board members emphasized the importance of growing mentorship structures, protecting academic freedom, and fostering a space where courageous leadership thrives. They called for expanding EWORA's reach, engaging the next generation, and ensuring that "inclusive excellence" becomes a defining standard in higher education.

The conference concluded with the EWORA Honorary Award Ceremony, where Prof. Manuela Veloso was recognized for her groundbreaking contributions to AI and her inspirational leadership. Her remarks — bridging science, ethics, and inclusion — encapsulated the conference's core message: The future of the academy depends on our ability to lead with values, empower all voices, and resist fragility with collective strength.

As participants return to their institutions, the conversations held in Lisbon will continue to resonate, shaping strategies, influencing cultures, and reinforcing a shared vision: a gender-equal academy powered by values-led leadership.