

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

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 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	7 - FUNDACJA CENTRUM IM PROFESORA BRONISLAWA GEREMKA (FG)
PIC number:	913612349
Project name and acronym:	Mothers of Europe (Mothers)

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	D1.2		
Event name:	Matki Europy. Brakująca połowa europejskiej historii – opening expert event in Poland		
Type:	seminar		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	Poland, Warsaw		
Date(s):	03.10.2024		
Website(s) (if any):	https://geremek.pl/matki-europy-brakujaca-polowa-europejskiej-historii-podsumowanie-debaty/		
Participants			
Female:	25		
Male:	12		
Non-binary:	N/A		
From country 1 [Poland]:	37		
Total number of participants:	37	From total number of countries:	1
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>On the seminar 'Mothers of Europe. The Missing Half of European History', a discussion was held on the role of women in modern history.</p> <p>The seminar was attended by the first Polish Commissioner Danuta Hübner, the director of the Batory Foundation Ewa Kulik-Bielińska (an opposition activist during the communist era) and the author of a biography of one of the leading "Solidarność" activists Anna Walentynowicz, Dorota Karaś. The discussion was moderated by Anna Kowalczyk – journalist, vice-president of the Women's History Museum Foundation.</p> <p>The speakers began with the "Solidarność" era, when women - both in Ewa Kulik-Bielińska's narrative and in the story of Anna Walentynowicz – were sidelined by men, taking on activities that men did not</p>			

want to do and replacing them when they were absent. At the same time, they were burdened with the responsibilities imposed on them by patriarchal culture – the home, raising children or cooking. “Solidarność” was a workers' movement, necessarily masculinised. But even in feminised sectors (such as the textile industry), there were no women in leadership positions in “Solidarność”. Anna Walentynowicz was an exception – a woman in whose defence the whole union, and in time almost the whole country, rallied. Walentynowicz herself, before she became the ‘Mother of Solidarność’ or ‘Anna Solidarność’, believed that ‘no one would follow a woman’.

Danuta Hübner co-shaped the system transformation and Poland's return to Europe. On the one hand, she emphasised that she was her own boss, while on the other she pointed out that the success of Polish integration was a gigantic effort by thousands of civil servants, because ‘the success of the state depends on the quality of the administration’. After the democratic breakthrough in Poland, the role of the ‘movers and shakers’ was crucial. It was not leaders but a collective, a mass of hard-working people, who democratised successive institutions, created European clubs and brought Poland into the Union. In many areas it was mainly women who worked in a world created by men. A world in which we talk a lot about the need for equality, but in the end, as Hübner pointed out, the leader and the face of success is usually a man.

The greatest potential of contemporary Poland, which Ewa Kulik-Bielińska believes is not sufficiently appreciated, is the collective. A collective that ‘pushes things forward’ and ‘delivers’, thanks to which changes for the better are possible. She called for greater appreciation of the collective and greater inclusion of different perspectives and positions, because even the best leader cannot foresee all the consequences of his or her actions and decisions alone.

We ended the seminar with the reflection that it is up to us to take this lesson from the past, have the discussion and start taking action to change the default model of leadership - from one person, solitary and masculine to communal and more diverse.

In addition to the speakers, the seminar was attended by activists, administrative staff, academics and journalists, who took part in the discussion and shared their perspectives and thoughts; among them: Monika Auch-Szkoda (sociologist and feminist activist), Monika Płatek (Doctor of Laws, academic teacher, feminist), Ewa Dąbrowska-Szulc (feminist activist, president of the Pro Femina Association), Filip Szulik-Szarecki (expert on countering disinformation) and Piotr Kaczyński (European affairs specialist).

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).