2025-2026

WHO GOT THE MICROPHONE?

MAPPING WOMEN CHINA EXPERTS' VISIBILITY IN EUROPEAN PANELS AND PODCASTS

Who gets invited to speak about China in Europe – and who remains unheard? The second edition of the Women Insight on China (WiCH) Audit examines the representation of women experts at China-focused public events and in podcasts across Europe. Building on our first audit, it tracks how representation has changed over the past year, revealing both gains and setbacks.



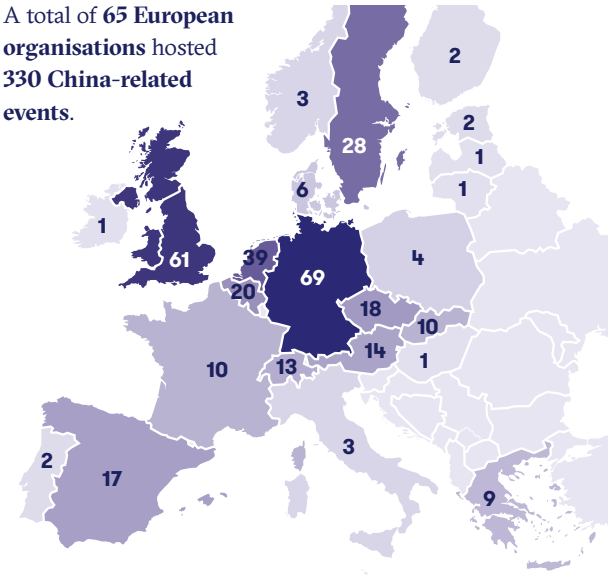
WiCH
WOMEN INSIGHT ON CHINA

EVENTS

Between October 2025 and September 2026, WiCH monitored selected institutions **across 30 European countries**, with China-related events recorded in 22 of them. These ranged from short seminars to multi-day conferences.

Number of China-related events by country

A total of **65 European organisations** hosted **330 China-related events**.



Top 10 organisers of China-related events in Europe

- 42 — Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)
- 30 — Dutch China Knowledge Network (CKN)
- 18 — Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP)
- 18 — Lau China Institute
- 13 — SOAS China Institute
- 12 — Asia Society
- 12 — Chatham House
- 10 — German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA)
- 9 — European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)
- 7 — Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy (AIES); Bruegel; Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS); European Values Center for Security Policy (EVC); German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP); Institute of International Relations (IDIS)

Note: The ranking covers only institutions and countries included in the WiCH Audit Panel and does not represent all China-related events organised across Europe. Where a research institution or organisation has an established English-language form of its name, that form is used.

Moderation by gender

307 moderations were identified in events or panels.



1 unknown (0.33%)

Panellists by gender

Across **330 events**, **1,138 speaking appearances** were recorded.



Keynote speakers by gender

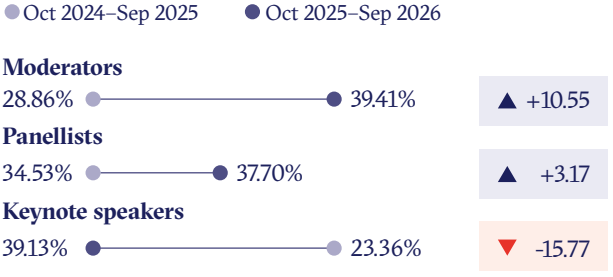
107 keynote speakers were identified in events or panels within the events.



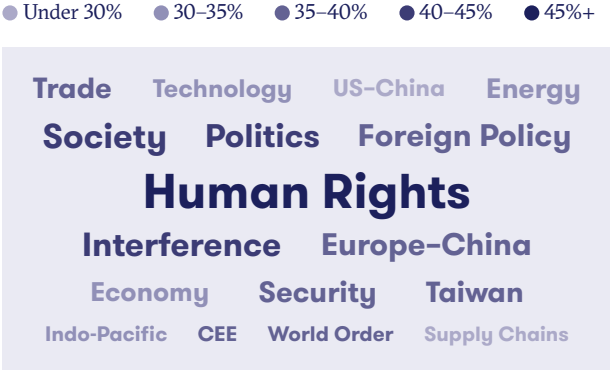
Yearly change: More women moderating, fewer delivering keynotes

The progress is uneven. Women's share among moderators exceeded their share among panellists. Yet this increase warrants caution. Moderators are often appointed internally, involve little additional cost and can be added late in the planning process – making a female moderator a convenient quick fix for a manel. Greater visibility in moderation, however, does not necessarily translate into greater access to expert roles.

Women's representation by event role



Discussed topics and who gets to speak

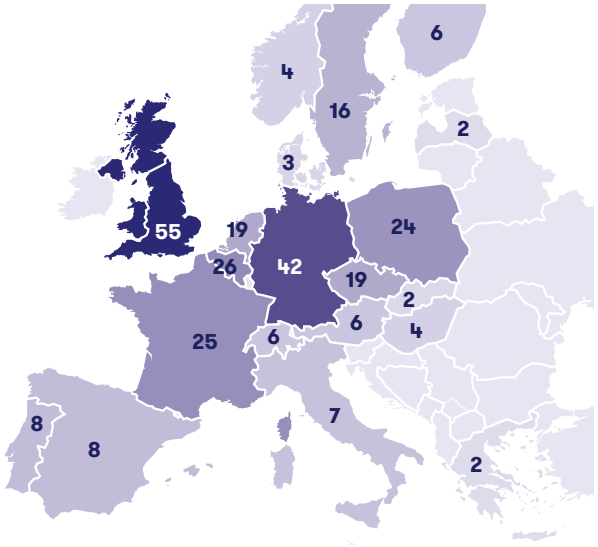


Note: Figures represent unique individuals within each thematic category. As events often cover multiple topics, individuals appear in more than one category.

PODCASTS

During the audit period, **42 monitored organisations** across **19 European countries** produced **268 China-related podcast episodes**.

Number of podcast episodes by country



Note: The ranking covers only institutions and countries included in the WiCH Audit Panel and does not represent all China-related podcast episodes produced across Europe

Number of podcast episodes by host institution (top 15 producers)

27
Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS)

19
Bruegel; Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)

17
SOAS China Institute

15
Chatham House

13
The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS)

12
Institut français des relations internationales (IFRI)

11
Association for International Affairs (AMO); European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)

10
Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques (IRIS)

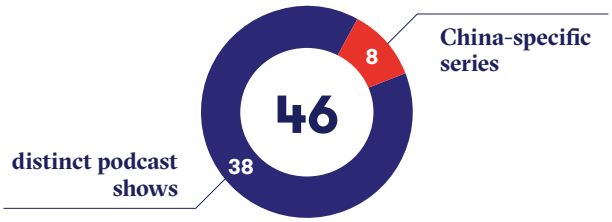
8
Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI)

7
Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI); LSE IDEAS; Oxford Institute for Energy Studies (OIES)

6
Asia Society; Clingendael Institute

Note: Where a research institution or organisation has an established English-language form of its name, that form is used.

Podcast shows featuring China



Podcast episode hostings by gender



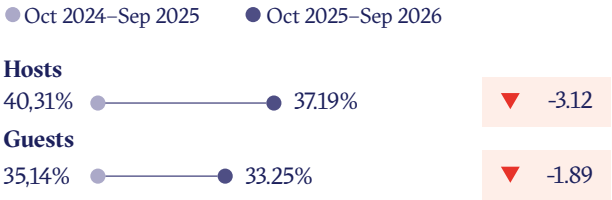
Podcast episode guests by gender



Yearly change: Fewer women hosting and invited as guests

Compared with 2024–2025, women's representation declined among both podcast hosts and guests. Women accounted for just 37.19% of hosting appearances and 33.25% of guest appearances, counted per podcast episode, in 2025–2026. Unlike at public events, podcasts show a decline in women's representation across both roles. The decrease among guests suggests that women are losing ground in access to expert visibility, reinforcing concerns raised by the sharp decline in female keynote speakers at events. The decline among hosts, however, warrants a different interpretation. Podcast hosts are typically tied to individual shows, and changes in their representation may reflect programmes ending or new ones launching rather than deliberate changes in host selection.

Women's representation by podcast role



Discussed topics and who gets heard

Women experts:

Under 30% · 30–35% · 35–40% · 40–45% · 45%+

Taiwan Supply Chains Foreign Policy
Interference Society Energy
Human Rights
CEE Security Indo-Pacific
World Order Technology Politics Economy
Trade US–China Europe–China

About WiCH and the Audit

Women Insight on China (WiCH) is a European initiative dedicated to increasing the visibility and representation of women experts on China. Through research, networking and mentoring, WiCH works to ensure that women's expertise is recognised and heard in European policy debates.

The WiCH Audit monitors gender representation at China-focused public events and in podcasts across selected European institutions. Conducted annually and now in its second edition, it provides comparable data to track changes over time, identify persistent gaps and encourage more inclusive speaker selection.

Methodology

The second audit covers October 2025 to September 2026. It draws on publicly available information about events and podcasts organised by Europe-based think tanks, including independent research institutes, and major university centres. The geographical scope encompasses all 27 EU member states, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The institutional sample (WiCH Audit Panel) was established in September 2025 using the Open Think Tank Directory (OTT) as its sole source, with institutions subsequently screened for independence. The panel was then fixed and retained unchanged for the second edition, regardless of subsequent updates to the OTT, to ensure consistent year-on-year comparisons.

Data collection and inclusion criteria

Events and podcast episodes were included if China was explicitly mentioned in their titles or if their titles or descriptions identified China as a substantive topic of discussion.

Data were collected through a systematic review of institutional websites, supplemented by corroborating social media posts where website information was incomplete.

For jointly organised events, attribution followed a hierarchy based on the institutions included in the first audit. Events were assigned to the main organiser if it was part of the original panel; otherwise, to the consortium or project leader if included; or, failing that, to the first listed co-organiser included in the panel.

Units of analysis

For moderation, each standalone event or individual panel within a multi-panel event was counted as a separate moderated unit.

Panellist and keynote speaker figures represent speaking appearances rather than unique individuals. Experts appearing at multiple events were counted for each appearance.

For podcasts too, both guest figures and host figures represent appearances rather than unique individuals, accounting for episodes with multiple hosts, changes in hosts over time, and irregular changes in hosts from one episode to another.

Year-on-year comparison

The first audit originally covered 13 months (October 2024–October 2025). To ensure comparability, its data were adjusted to a 12-month period (October 2024–September 2025), matching the second audit (October 2025–September 2026). All percentages refer to women's representation, with changes expressed in percentage points.

Limitations and disclaimer

The audit relies primarily on information made publicly available by event and podcast organisers. Its findings are therefore subject to inaccuracies, omissions or subsequent changes in those sources.

To address gaps, selected think tanks were contacted directly. Several provided summary breakdowns of women and men serving as keynote speakers, moderators and panellists. All confidential information was used exclusively for aggregated reporting.

Funding and implementation

WiCH is made possible through the generous support of Stiftung Mercator. The initiative is designed and implemented by the Association for International Affairs (AMO), a leading independent Czech foreign policy think tank with a long-standing commitment to gender equality.

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