

23 February 2026

Feedback of

ACT | The App Association
(Transparency Reg. # 72029513877-54)
Square de Meeus 35,
1000 Brussels, Belgium

to the

European Commission

Regarding

EU's action plan for women in research,
innovation and startups

I. Introduction

ACT | The App Association (hereafter ‘ACT’) welcomes the opportunity to submit comments to the European Commission’s consultation on the EU’s Action Plan for Women in Research, Innovation, and Startups.

ACT is a policy trade association for the small business technology developer community. Our members are entrepreneurs, innovators, and independent developers within the global app ecosystem that engage with verticals across every industry. We work with and for our members to promote a policy environment that rewards and inspires innovation while providing resources that help them raise capital, create jobs, and continue to build incredible technology. Today, the ecosystem ACT represents—which we call the app economy—is valued at approximately €95.7 billion and is responsible for more than 1.4 million jobs in the European Union (EU).¹

II. Women in research, innovation, and startups

ACT strongly supports the European Commission for developing a comprehensive action plan addressing persistent gender gaps in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. This initiative represents a significant and necessary step toward building a more competitive, innovative, and equitable European Research Area (ERA). The technology sector, which has historically faced gender imbalances, stands to benefit from targeted action plans that expand access, support, and opportunities for women researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

From a competitiveness perspective, addressing gender disparities in technology and innovation is imperative for Europe’s strategic positioning in the global digital economy. Expanding pathways for women into technology careers represents both a social imperative and an economic necessity. Furthermore, increasing women’s participation in technology entrepreneurship will diversify the types of solutions being developed, ensuring that products and services better address the needs of all market segments.

The Action Plan’s emphasis on diversity, equality, and inclusiveness aligns with ACT’s position and our members’ interests in fostering innovation ecosystems that reflect and serve diverse populations. Meaningful progress requires addressing barriers at multiple levels: educational pathways, workplace cultures, access to capital, professional networks, and institutional policies. While this consultation focuses on formal programs and policies, sustainable change also requires addressing informal barriers, conscious biases, and systemic factors that deter women’s participation in technology fields.

We particularly emphasise the importance of intersectional approaches that recognise diverse experiences and barriers faced by women from different backgrounds, including those from racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those from economically disadvantaged communities. An effective action plan must address not only gender gaps but also the compounding effects of multiple dimensions of underrepresentation.

¹ See https://actonline.org/wp-content/uploads/220912_ACT-App-EU-Report.pdf

In conclusion, ACT strongly endorses the European Commission's Action Plan for Women in Research, Innovation, and Startups as a vital initiative for advancing both equity and competitiveness in the European Research Area. By expanding opportunities for women researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs, Europe can unlock a broader range of perspectives, solutions, and talent – driving innovation that better serves all market segments and communities. ACT is committed to supporting this agenda and working alongside the Commission and stakeholders across the technology sector to build more inclusive, dynamic, and competitive innovation ecosystems.

Sincerely,



Mike Sax
Founder and Chairperson

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EU Policy Manager

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