

THE CZFB ANNOUNCES THE CELEBRATION OF THE SIXTH
EDITION OF BWAW IN MARCH 2026

BWAW concludes its fifth edition by calling for more equality and female talent in the business sector

- Eva Menor, Councilor for Equality and Feminism of the Generalitat de Catalunya, presided over the last Networking Lunch, highlighting that “with the recent approval of the 50 measures for effective equality between women and men, the Government of Catalunya wants to engage with various sectors of society. I encourage investment in equality, because diversity is a richness within an organisation”
- The key event for advancing gender equality has brought together 71 high-level speakers across 15 sessions, where solutions that allow progress in terms of parity, equal opportunities and the promotion of women in fields such as education, young entrepreneurship, the legal sector, culture or Industry 4.0 have been discussed

Barcelona, 6 March 2025.- The **Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week (BWAW)** today concludes its fifth edition by demanding more equality and more female talent in the industrial sector. Promoted by the **Consorti de la Zona Franca de Barcelona (CZFB)** with the collaboration of the Incyde Foundation of the Spanish Chambers of Commerce, the hybrid and gender-balanced event has gathered **71 high-level speakers**. Throughout the **15 debate sessions** held over three days, representatives of public and private institutions, large international corporations, as well as Spanish SMEs and startups have presented their projects and discussed the challenges society faces to achieve real gender equality.

The fifth edition of the Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week (BWAW) ended with a Networking Lunch chaired by the Councilor for Equality and Feminism of the Generalitat de Catalunya, **Eva Menor**. In this meeting, attended by both male and female executives responsible for decision-making in their companies, as well as entrepreneurs from various sectors, Menor presented the main lines of action of the department. In this regard, the Minister highlighted that **“with the recent approval of the 50 measures for effective equality between women and men, the Government of Catalunya wants to engage with various sectors of society. I encourage investment in equality, because diversity is a**

richness within an organisation". Menor also emphasised: "Women make up 50% of the population and, therefore, 50% of the available talent in society. It is necessary to assert this situation because the data is not encouraging. We cannot afford to wait another hundred years to achieve equality. As a society, we have the commitment and responsibility to accelerate this change".

Gender Equality in the Third Sector

The day began with the **BSocial** vertical and the session "*Strengthening Equality from the Third Sector*" moderated by **Mirian Izquierdo**, president of the Woman Forward Foundation, and the following speakers: **Lucía Mateo**, Head of Social Communication at Ilunion; **Elena Fontanet**, Regional Secretary of the Creu Roja de Catalunya; **Carolina Pallàs**, General Director and Manager at Prohabitatge Somllar; **Roser Vila d'Abadal**, co-founder of the Associació Mil y un sueños, and **Júlia Gómez**, Coordinator of the Business Social Projects Area at the Fundació PIMEC.

This session highlighted that women continue to face significant barriers in accessing housing, employment, and technology, especially in rural areas, where the digital divide and work-life balance difficulties further exacerbate inequality. Additionally, the dual discrimination based on gender and disability remains a challenge that limits their opportunities. To address these issues, it was emphasized that it is essential to implement a comprehensive approach that promotes equal opportunities, empowers women, and ensures access to key resources that support their full inclusion.

Companies Advancing towards Equality

Subsequently, the **BCorporate** vertical "*Transforming Corporations through Female Empowerment*" took place, moderated by **Blanca Sorigué**, General Director of CZFB, featuring: **Ramon Agenjo**, Vice-President and Director of the Fundació DAMM; **Chema Casas**, General Director of Telefónica Catalunya; **Sandra Hors**, Director of Corporate Affairs, Brand and Sustainability at Vueling, and **Montse Serra**, Vice-President and General Director of Services and Solutions at HP for Southern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

As noted in the session, it is important to continue advancing gender equality through empowerment, visibility, and networking. Furthermore, the need to promote female presence in traditionally male-dominated sectors was highlighted, encouraging their participation in decision-making positions and creating support and training spaces. The importance of fostering interest in STEM disciplines from childhood was also underscored, thus ensuring greater inclusion and equity in the future.

Consolidation of Female Leadership

The midday session continued with the penultimate **BScience** vertical and the debate session "*Women in Science: Inspiring Generations*" moderated by **Sergi Artigas**, Innovation Board

Strategic Manager at Leitat, with the experiences of: **Natalia Gennaro**, CEO and Medical Director at Instituto Médico Dra. Natalia Gennaro - CLUB ANTIAGING; **Alicia Martínez**, CEO of Time is Brain; **Patricia González**, Junior Group Leader at the University of Seville, and **Andrea Aznar**, Director of Bloom (Startup Women Hub).

The roundtable discussion revolved around the importance of eliminating structural biases, fostering confidence in women as leaders, and ensuring real work-life balance that does not limit their careers. The key role of education in equal opportunities from an early age was also addressed, as well as the urgency of improving research and medical diagnosis with an inclusive approach. Finally, it was indicated that the path to equity requires effort, courage, and recognition of female talent in all sectors.

Labour Rights in Support of Equality

The fifth edition of BWAW concluded with the **BUnion** vertical and the session "*The Power of Organisations in Support of Labour Rights*" moderated by **Lola García**, Deputy Director of La Vanguardia, with the participation of: **Afra Blanco Rodríguez**, trade unionist; **Belén López**, General Secretary of CCOO of the Girona Regions, **Gemma Lienas**, writer and lecturer, and **Yolanda Funes**, Secretary of Climate Change and Just Transition at UGT.

The panel participants confirmed that gender inequality is still present in the workplace, with women who, despite breaking the glass ceiling, do not find the same conditions as men. The lack of effective implementation of anti-harassment protocols and the need for equality plans to have real budgets and monitoring were also highlighted. In this context, it was emphasised that breaking stereotypes and equitably redistributing care is key to achieving real equality.

Spain has made progress in gender equality, but there is still work to be done

In this edition, the panels have addressed solutions that allow progress in terms of parity, equal opportunities, and the promotion of women in fields such as education, young entrepreneurship, the legal sector, business leadership, the public sector, the cultural sector, and Industry 4.0.

The conclusions of this fifth edition point to urgent needs to move towards gender equality in any business field. For example, more support is needed for female entrepreneurs. Globally, **only 10% of startups were founded by women in 2024**. In Catalonia, there are **2.200 startups, and in 35% of them**, at least one woman is part of the founding team. Additionally, access to funding remains a challenge for them, as only 3% of funds are allocated to women-led startups.

Furthermore, the presence of women in STEM careers has declined over the past two decades. According to UNESCO, **women only represent 33% of those trained in STEM fields**. The lack of female role models continues to be an obstacle in the tech sector, making it essential to make more women visible in leadership and mentorship positions.

In this regard, **Blanca Sorigué**, General Director of the CZFB, stated that ***"BWAU accelerates the visibility of women in the business sphere since 2021. At CZFB, we are creating hybrid, innovative, agile, and above all, equal spaces because we will not achieve gender equality without the participation of the whole society. In this edition, we emphasize the need to educate without gender perspective from very early ages, as talent has no colour, gender, or age"***.

Meanwhile, **Pere Navarro**, Special State Delegate of the CZFB, also expressed that ***"We are very pleased with this fifth edition of BWAW, which has brought together 71 speakers in 15 sessions from various sectors of activity. In a world where gender equality and the visibility of women are regressing, it is very necessary to highlight events like BWAW to continue advancing towards gender equality. Women represent half of the population and without their talent, perspective, and leadership, it is impossible to progress as a society"***.

With all this, the Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona is already working on the next edition of the Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week, which will once again be held on the occasion of International Women's Day in March 2026.

About the Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona

The Consorci de la Zona Franca de Barcelona is a public company that acts as a catalyst for technological and industrial development by providing support to companies in their transition to the digital age. Drive innovation through the 3D Incubator and Logistics 4.0 Incubator; promotes the transformation of industry 4.0 from the DFactory Barcelona technology hub and connects the new economy and its key socio-economic sectors. It organises congresses of economic interest to Barcelona such as the largest logistics exhibition in Spain and Southern Europe, the SIL, as well as major benchmark events with an innovative format such as the Barcelona New Economy Week (BNEW) or the Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week (BWAW).

In its plenary session it has representatives of the Spanish government, the Generalitat of Catalonia, the Barcelona City Council, and the main economic entities of the city.

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