A large group of people, mostly wearing hard hats and casual work clothes, are standing in a line on a grassy field. They are all looking towards the camera and some have their arms raised in a celebratory gesture. In the background, a dense line of green trees separates the field from a city skyline. The skyline includes several tall buildings, with the Shard being the most prominent one. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

GENDER EQUALITY IN CONSTRUCTION, WOOD AND FORESTRY

A Resource Toolkit for Gender Equality at Work

OUTLINE

- 1) Challenges in the industry** - Climate change / Labour and skill shortages
- 2) Snapshot of women in the industry**
- 3) Content of the toolkit** - Survey and review of recent studies
- 4) Structuring the toolkit** - The barriers
- 5) The toolkit** - A holistic approach
- 6) Future research and long-term recommendations**

CHALLENGES IN THE INDUSTRY

The challenges of climate change



Many barriers to gender diversity are also barriers to achieving low carbon production

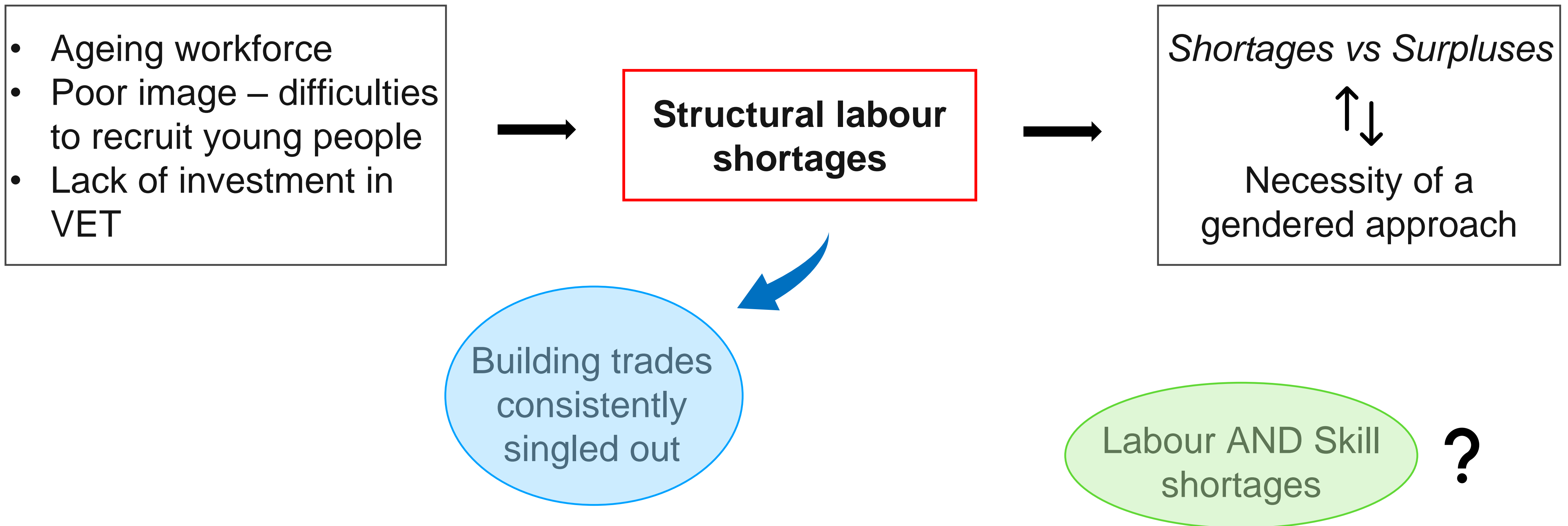
- Greater emphasis on formal qualification
- Increased attractiveness

- Higher educational achievements
- Greater presence in sustainability-oriented subject courses

Green transition could open opportunities for women

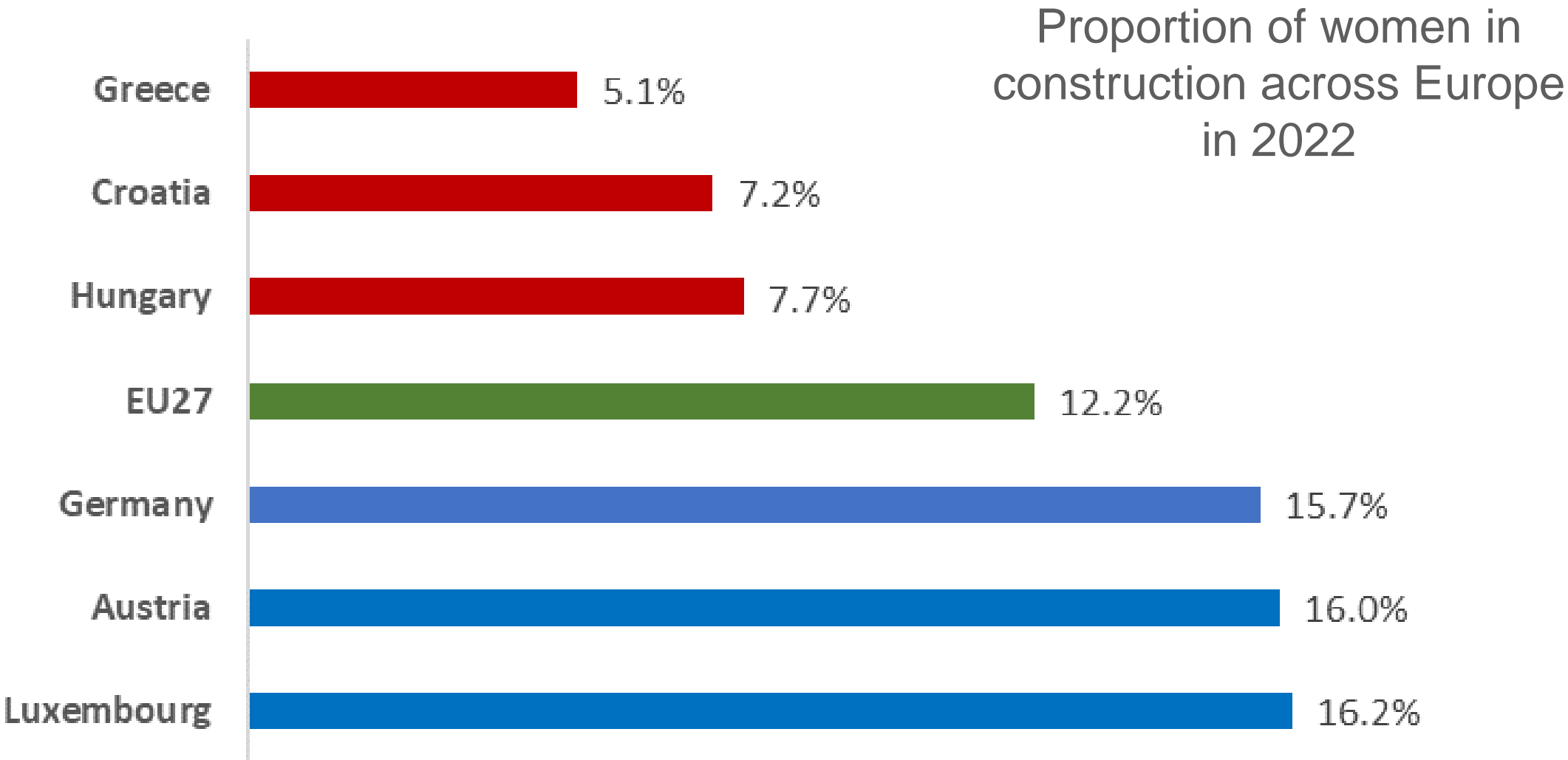
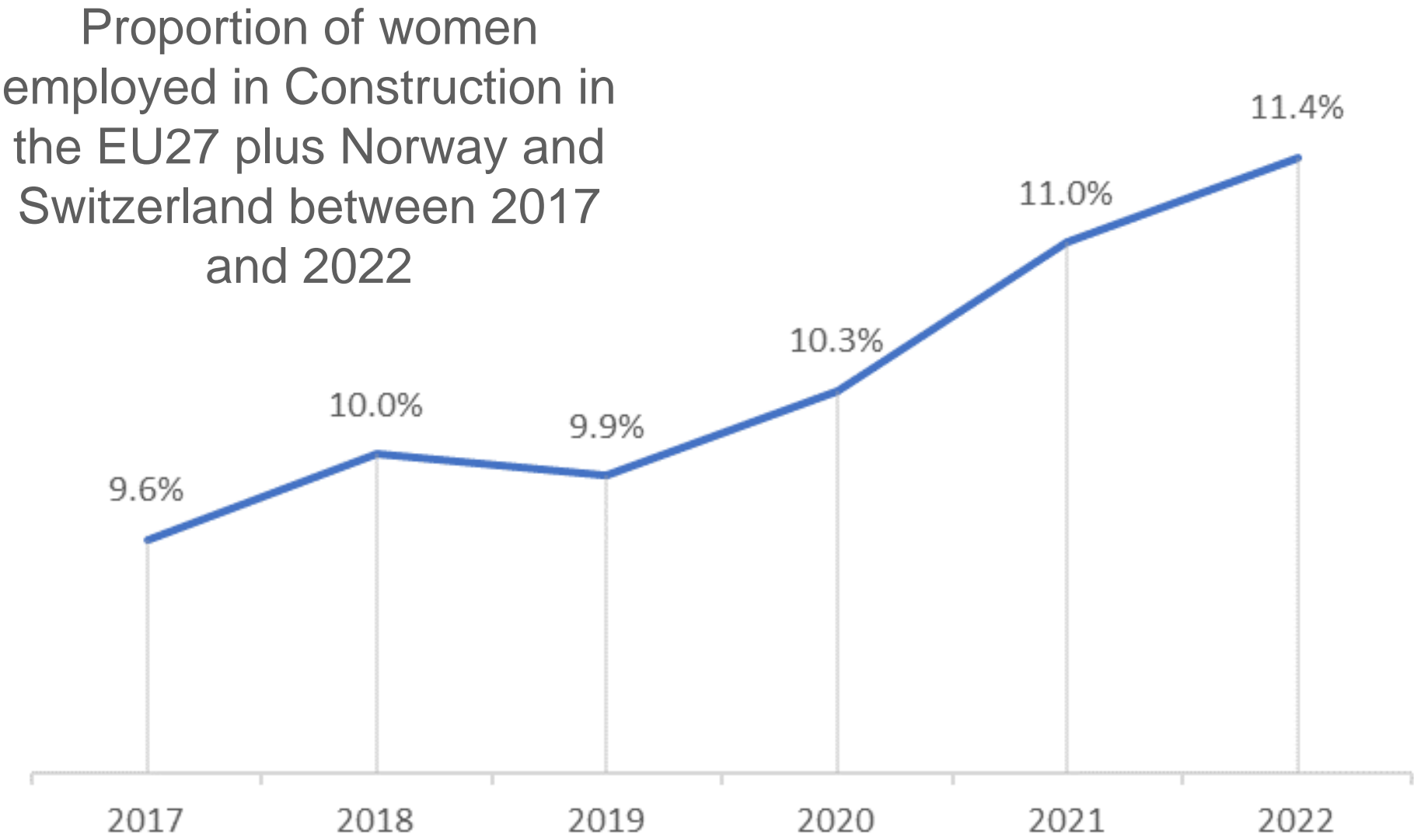
CHALLENGES IN THE INDUSTRY

Labour and skill shortages



WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY

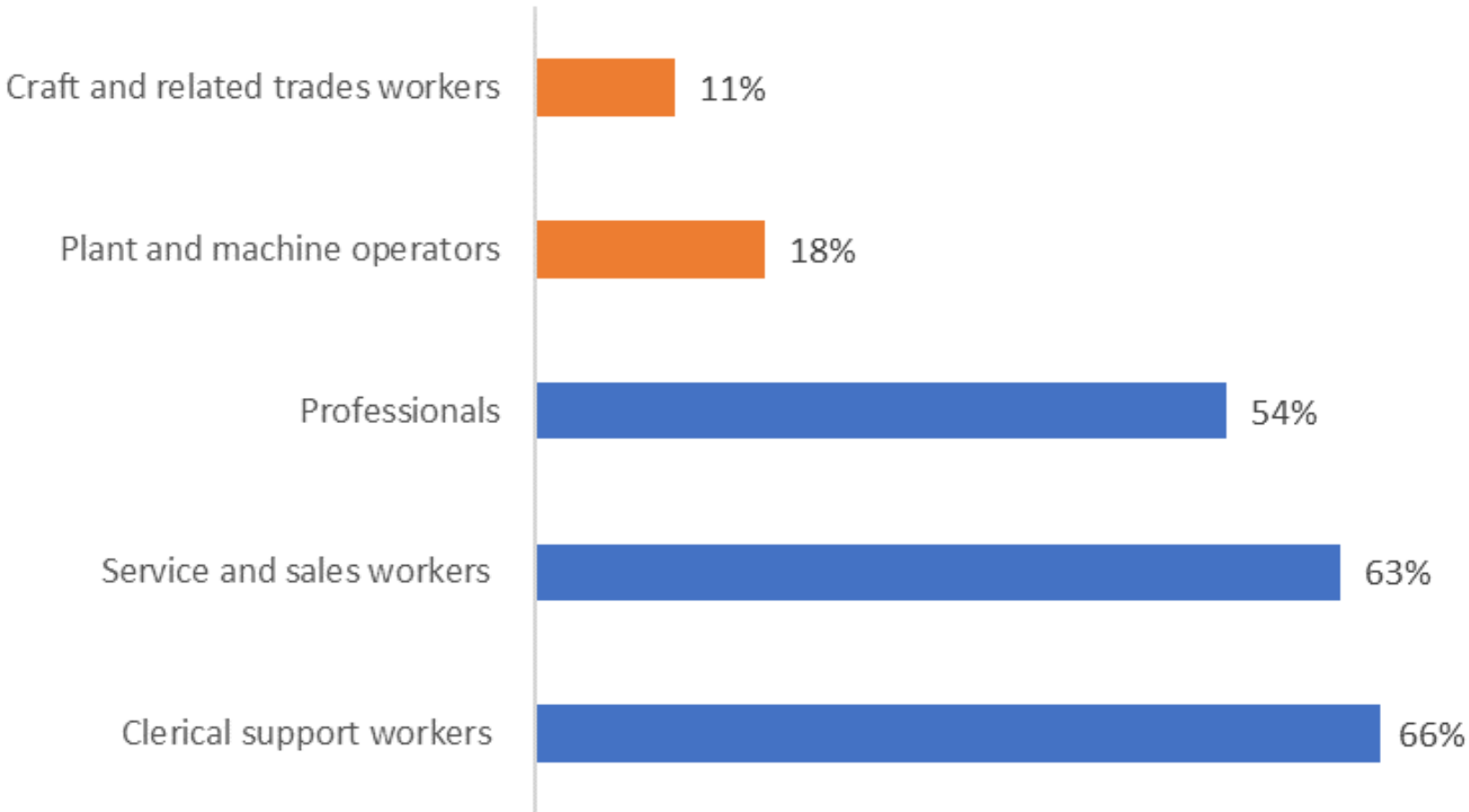
An upward trend



With wide variations across the EU

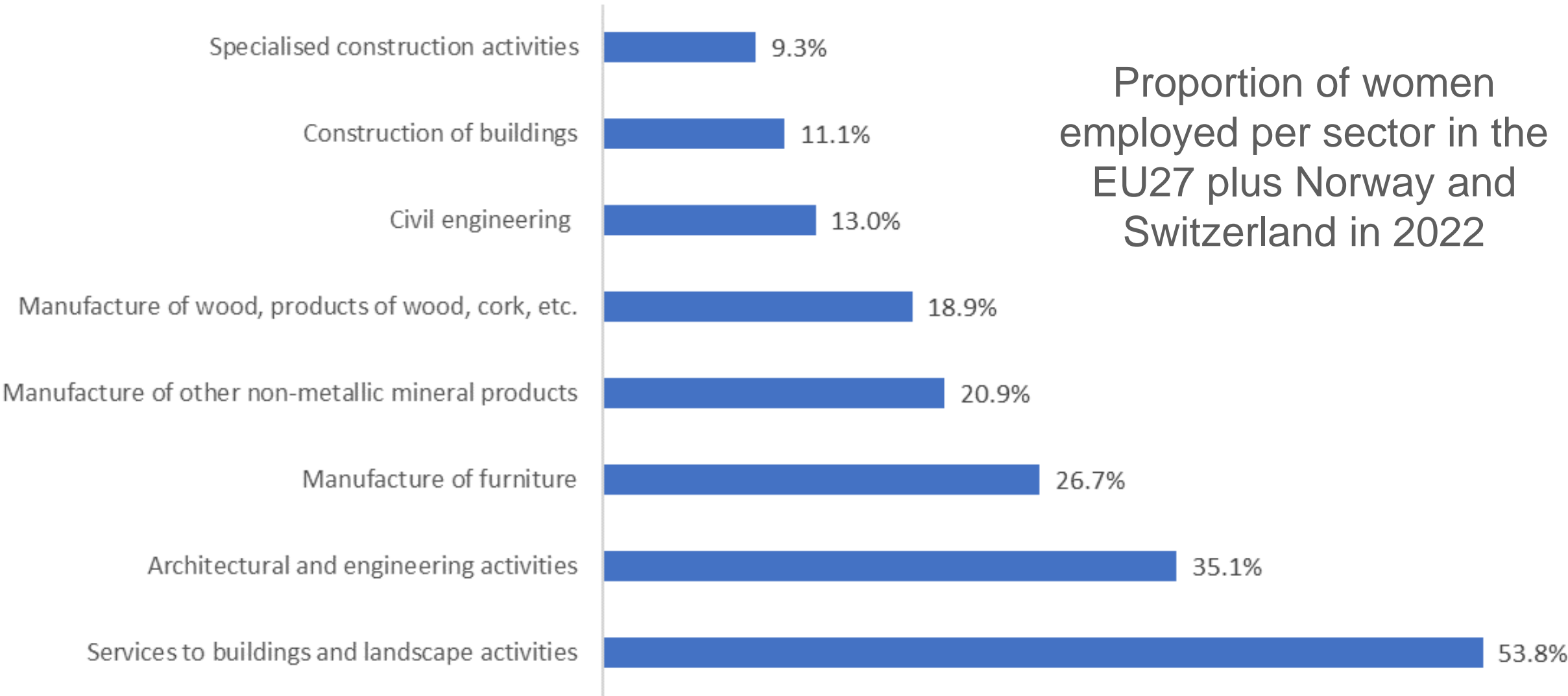
WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY

➤ Few precise and reliable breakdown per activity



Share of women by occupation in 2021 in the EU

Variations across occupations



Proportion of women employed per sector in the EU27 plus Norway and Switzerland in 2022

With variations across sectors

WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY



Access to more precise breakdown per activity is difficult and hides the comparatively much lower proportion of women among construction operatives.

3%

Sheet and structural metal workers, moulders and welders

3%

Electrical equipment installers and repairers

1%

Building frame and related trades workers

CONTENT OF THE TOOLKIT



Survey questionnaire to all 77 EFBWW
national affiliates present in 36 countries
Generated 25 responses from 19 trade
unions

2020-21

Analysis of questionnaire responses
Collection of statistical data
Review of relevant recent studies

2023

Preparation of a practical and industry-
specific manual highlighting good practices

2023

Introduction

Specific actions

Members' perspectives

STRUCTURING THE TOOLKIT

Well-known barriers to women's entry, retention and career progression in industry



Employment policies and practices

- Fragmented industry and employment

Industry culture and image

- Lack of knowledge about the industry and poor attractiveness
- Traditional stereotypes, sexist attitudes and male dominated culture

HR policies and practices

- Informal recruitment, career progression selection and networking
- Lack of mentoring and role models

Working and employment conditions

- Inadequate and poor working and employment conditions

Effective VET

- Male dominated education and training

THE TOOLKIT

A holistic approach

Employment policies and practices

- Target setting
- Industry structure
- Procurement

Industry culture and image

- Engagement of women
- Stakeholder involvement and cooperation

National Collective Bargaining Agreement Wood sector (Italy) considers “Positive actions for the realisation of equality between men and women at work and to combat gender discrimination”:

- Through the sectoral bilateral Observatory, study and research activities on the **promotion of positive actions** in favour of female employment
- Companies with at least 50 employees must prepare, every two years, a **report on the employment situation of male and female workers** and provide it to the company’s trade union representatives.

Examples of **survey** and subsequent **awareness campaigns**:

- Finland – Syrjintä on syvältä (Discrimination sucks) to **raise awareness about harassment** and help people recognize what harassment is and what should be done if it happens
- Switzerland – survey of women’s day-to-day experiences at work in the building trades, followed by a collectively agreed **one-day women’s strike**
- UK – **survey of women members** in the construction industry, which reveals serious concerns around welfare facilities, a culture undermining women, lack of action when women raise issues of concern

THE TOOLKIT

A holistic approach

HR policies and practices

- Recruitment and retention
- Career progression
- Mentoring

Working and employment conditions

- Working conditions, including OSH, support structures, and gender-specific provisions
- Employment conditions, including policies and practices on flexible working, work-life balance and equality

Recurring themes in relation to **Occupational Safety and Health** - separate changing rooms and washrooms, provision of adequate work uniforms, protection of pregnancy, prevention of sexual harassment

Agreement of the Wood Furnishing Sector (Italy) negotiated in 2015 outlines the '**Codes of conduct** to be adopted in the fight against sexual harassment and mobbing'

Recurring themes in relation to **Work-Life balance**

- **Care-related leave** including parental leave and childcare
- **Maternity** – complement legal rules by increasing paid allowance + paid leave for breastfeeding
- **Paternity** – CBA provisions are increasingly more common
- **Flexible working** – WFH, time banks, reversible part time entitlement, shorter working days, etc.

THE TOOLKIT

A holistic approach

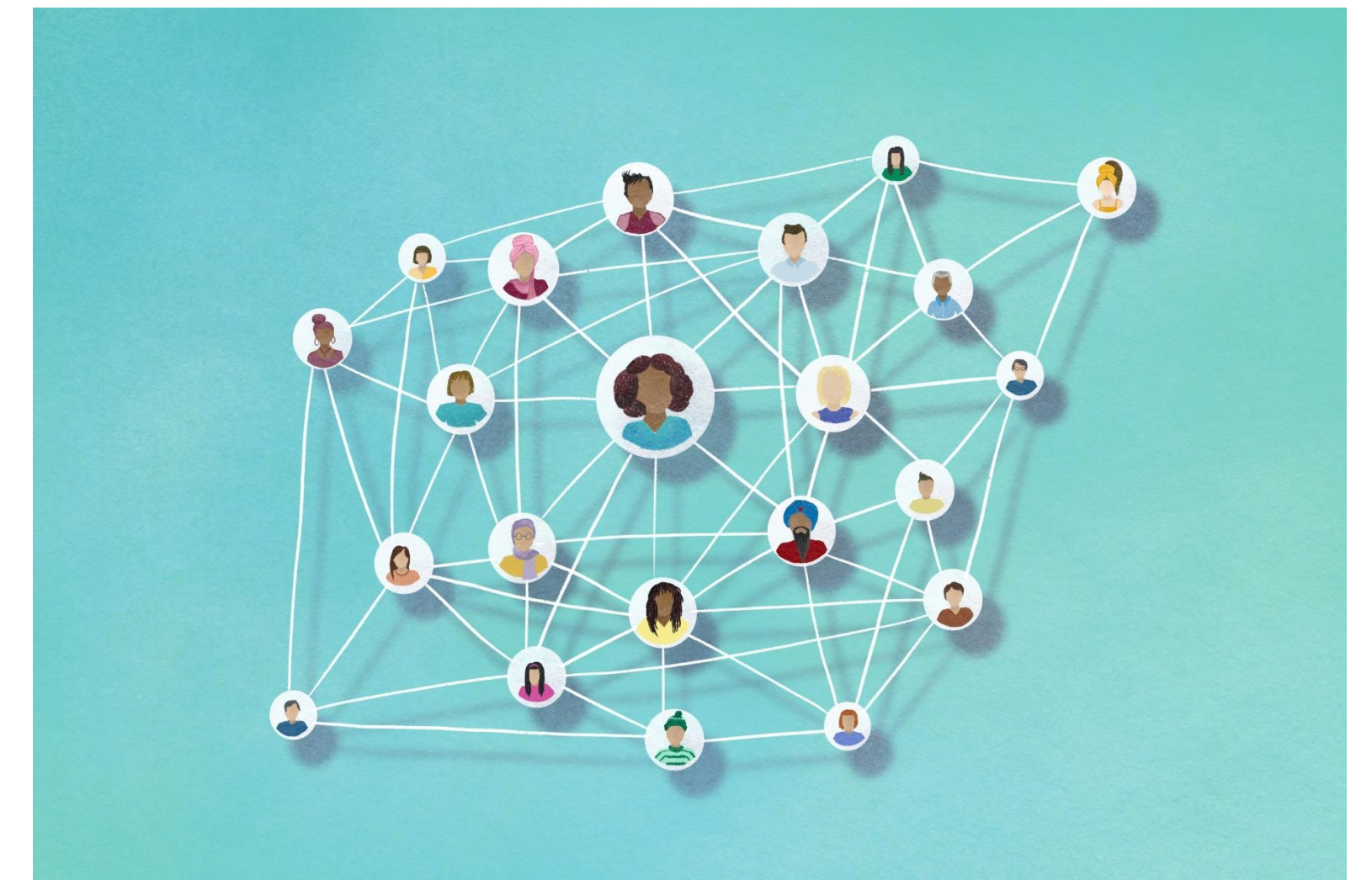
Effective VET

- Appropriate initial and continuing VET, including for low energy construction (including energy efficiency, retrofitting, etc), automatization, and digitalisation

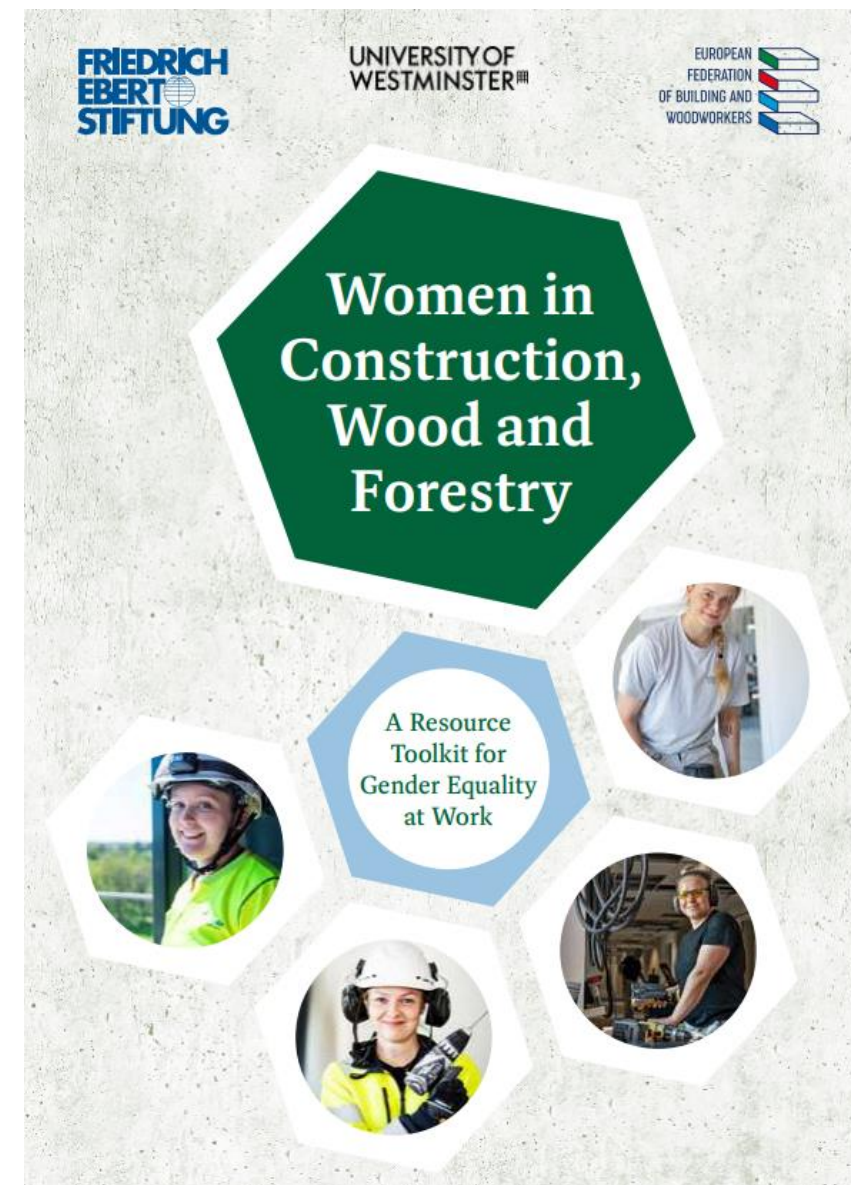
The National collective agreement for the building sector requires **the bilateral vocational training system** (Formedil and Building schools) to formulate **specific training programmes to increase sectoral female employment**

FUTURE RESEARCH AND LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **More bottom up, participatory approaches** - Beyond top-down rules on maternity and parental leave, consider multi-stakeholder engagement and network building
- **Higher quality data** - Consistent, detailed, sector-specific, and comparable
- **Equality vs Equity**
- **Gendered approach to the green transition** - Associate transition to low-carbon production with requirements for a more gender balanced workforce



Thank you



Download the
full report



And for more information, please contact: guedesc2@westminster.ac.uk

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION - Panel Discussion

- What are the main barriers and levers to the participation of women in the construction industry and corresponding education and training facilities?
- How can the most relevant actors in the industry contribute to the integration of women at various stages?
- How do inclusivity demands in the industry, including of women, intersect with the transition to greener construction?