

The EU policy on gender equality in research and innovation

Based on the EU policies following quotes may be useful in arguing for the implementation of Gender Equality Plans and the promotion of gender equality measures:

“Gender equality in research and innovation has gained increased attention in the European Union (EU). The EU has a well-established regulatory framework on gender equality, including binding Directives, which apply across the whole labour market, and thus also to the research sector. All Member States have to various degrees brought their national laws in conformity with the EU Directives, but ensuring full application and enforcement of the rights foreseen by such laws remains a challenge.

However, the peculiarities of the research sector demand a tailored response to guarantee de facto gender equality in research combining scientific career development with adequate social protection for all. Moreover, issues such as gender bias in evaluating scientific performance or appointment to leadership and decision-making positions fall outside the EU Directives because of the absence of an actual employment relationship. Although direct support to female scientists' careers has been complemented by efforts to better integrate gender equality into research organisations' strategies and plans, statistics show that these measures have not yet achieved the desired impacts.”

Full document: [Advancing Gender Equality in the European Research Area](#)

“Promoting gender equality in science and innovation is a commitment of the Union. In Horizon 2020, gender will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue in order to rectify imbalances between women and men, and to integrate a gender dimension in research and innovation programming and content. ”

“The activities developed under Horizon 2020 should promote equality between women and men in research and innovation, by addressing in particular the underlying causes of gender imbalance, by exploiting the full potential of both female and male researchers, and by integrating the gender dimension into the research and innovation content as well as by paying particular attention to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in other relevant advisory and expert bodies in order to improve the quality of research and to stimulate innovation. Activities should also aim at implementation of principles relating to equality between women and men as laid down in Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union and in Article 8 TFEU.” Full document: [Horizon 2020: Official Journal of the European Union](#)

“Inequalities between women and men violate fundamental rights. They also impose a heavy toll on the economy and result in underutilisation of talent. On the other hand, economic and business benefits can be gained from enhancing gender equality (1). In order to achieve the objectives of Europe 2020(2), namely smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the potential and the talent pool of women need to be used more extensively and more efficiently.”

Full document: [Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015](#)

“The Ministers further adopted conclusions on the promotion of equality between men and women in the European Research Area (ERA). These cover a certain number of aspects considered essential to allow men and women to benefit from equal opportunities in the area of research and innovation, which “will contribute to strengthening competitiveness and encouraging growth and job creation”, it reads. These conclusions highlight “the importance of supporting cultural and institutional change, in the context of the ERA’s road map, to encourage gender equality”, indicated Marc Hansen during the press conference after the meeting.

It primarily concerns encouraging Member States and the Commission to set ambitious objectives in the area of gender equality and to take concrete measures in their action plans and their strategies between now and mid-2016, complying with the conclusions adopted on 29 May 2015, concerning the roadmap for the ERA, during the period 2015-2020. In this regard, “the Ministers invited Member States to formulate their benchmarks for greater equality between men and women for teaching positions, where there is a more striking divide and, a fortiori, to make real progress to also attain greater equality between men and women in positions of responsibility and management roles”, said Marc Hansen.

Carlos Moedas commented that as we have been discussing gender equality for a long time, “the time has now come” to act firmly and “change things”. In this regard, the implementation of precise objectives to be achieved is necessary, according to the Commissioner. He said that the Commission is at the forefront in this area for having defined this type of objective for its groups of experts (40% of women) and in going even further in the context of the Horizon 2020 programme (50%). “It’s up to us as Member States to change and implement these objectives, in order to act”, he continued, welcoming the introduction of such objectives “for the first time” in Council conclusions and “the excellent work” of the Presidency in this context.

In its conclusions, the Council also invited research funding organisations to provide incentives to encourage research performance organisations to develop gender mainstreaming strategies. In addition, the Ministers “recognise the importance of regular data collection and of monitoring the implementation of policies to promote gender equality in research”, continued the Secretary of State.”

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