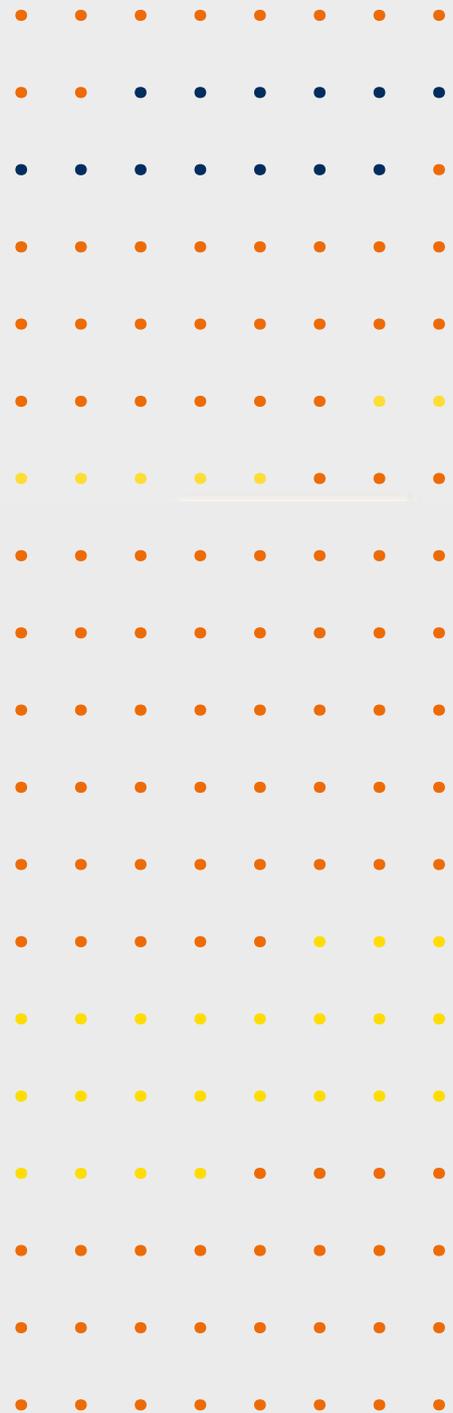
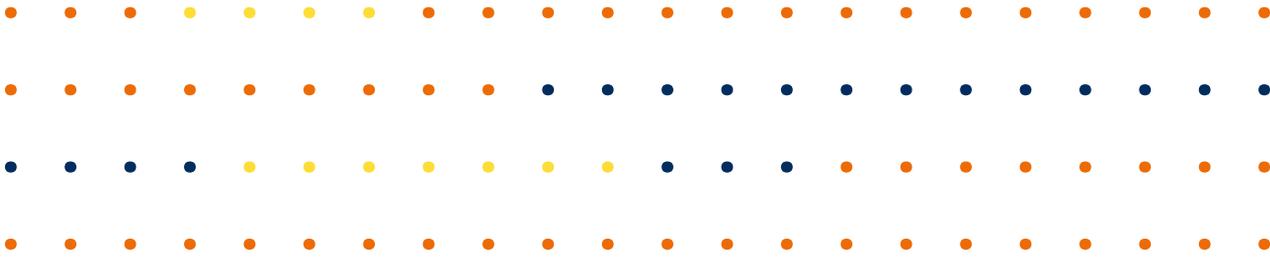


IO 1 FINAL REPORT





This publication reflects the views only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Magdalena Póltorak (ed.)

*The final report was developed as part of the project GEPARD:
Gender Equality Programme in Academia – Raising Diversity.*

*Project no:
2021-1-PL01-KA220-HED-000027532*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Introductory Remarks	
	1.1 Gender Equality Plans: EU legal framework and general assumptions.....	5
	1.2 Methodology for developing and implementing a Gender Equality Plan – brief overview.....	12
	1.3 GEP policy within an international consortium of the GEPARD Project.....	15
	1.3.1 The Gender Equality Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice.....	15
	1.3.2 The Gender Equality Plan at the L-Università ta’ Malta.....	16
	1.3.3 The Gender Equality Plan at the University of Miskolc	18
	1.3.4 The Gender Equality Plan at the University of Cyprus.....	19
	1.3.5 The Gender Equality Activities at the University of Salerno.....	21
	1.3.6 The Gender Equality Plan at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg.....	24
02	IO1 motivation, methodology and outcomes.....	27
	2.1 UGEP (rationale and procedure).....	27
	2.2 Recommendations for partners.....	29
03	Findings from expert interviews (general overview).....	31
04	Key areas – justification and benefits.....	39
	4.1 Work-Life Balance and Organisational Culture.....	41
	4.2 Gender balance in leadership and equal participation of women and men in decision-making.....	42
	4.3 Gender equality in recruitment and career progression.....	44
	4.4 Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content.....	46
	4.5 Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	47
	4.6 Intersectionality and Diversity.....	49
	Appendix 1: Recommendations for partners – template	
	Appendix 2: Questionnaire of expert interview	

Introductory Remarks



01

Introductory Remarks¹

1. Gender Equality Plans: EU legal framework and general assumptions

The European Union has always set itself the goal of achieving equal opportunities for genders globally. The implementation of the different measures is not completed yet, many steps have been taken in recent years and decades that have contributed to the complete elimination of differences between genders. The measures and the legal framework established try to regulate the issue in a general context. The European Union tries to ensure gender equality through several main solutions:

- On the one hand, it seeks to create the appropriate regulatory framework by developing the relevant legal standards.
- On the other hand, it has integrated the gender dimension into all its policies and makes it a universal requirement.
- Tertiary, it introduced a number of targeted measures to improve the situation of women.

In terms of the legal context, the EU first established the principle of „equal pay for equal work” in 1957, which can still be found in Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (hereinafter: TFEU) as the cornerstone of equal opportunities for men and women. Each Member State is required to ensure that this principle would be implemented. It is also stated that the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt measures to ensure the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment, including the principle of equal pay for equal work. As regards the implementation of measures, we find in this section that, in order to ensure full equality between men and women in working life, the principle of equal treatment does not prevent Member States from maintaining or adopting measures providing for certain advantages in order to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue professional activities, or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in their career development. These requirements were later appeared in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Article 8 of TFEU also gives the EU the task of eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between women and men in all its activities. It can therefore be seen that the world of work was the first to develop the issue of gender equality, but over the years the European Union has adopted many other legal acts to ensure equality not only in employment relations but also, as far as possible, in all areas of life.

Among the main relevant legal documents the first mention should be made of Directive 79/7/EEC², which was the first to aim at eliminating the differences

¹ This part of the report was developed largely on the basis of: E. Kriston, *Legal background of gender equality, Handbook-GEPARD-DEF---ING_042024.pdf* (gepard-project.eu), pp. 12-17 and Torbus U, Póttorak M., *Gender Equality Plan for R&I. Observations Based on the Initial Experiences of the University of Silesia in Katowice*, *Roczniki Administracji i Prawa* 2022; 4 (XXII): 51-69, <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0016.3315> pp. 52-62 and individual experience of the GEPARD Projects partners.

² COUNCIL DIRECTIVE of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (79/7/EEC) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcon->

between men and women in the field of social security. In particular, it protects against the risk of sickness, disability, old age, accidents at work, occupational diseases and unemployment, and the rules and social assistance intended to supplement or replace these schemes. The document provides equal treatment in the following areas - without respect to marital or family status:

- the scope of the schemes and the conditions for access to them,
- as regards the obligation to contribute and the calculation of contributions,
- the calculation of benefits, including allowances for spouses and dependants, and the conditions governing the duration and retention of entitlement to benefits.

The next milestone in legislation was Directive 92/85/EEC³ on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth. In this case, the legislation approaches a much more specialized group of persons in a unique situation, where differentiation is necessary in order to give them, equal opportunities compared to ordinary workers.

The expansion of equal opportunities issues started in the early 2000s when the European Union tried to find a general solution to the issue by leaving the world of work. It was the first time that Council Directive 2000/43/EC⁴ implemented the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin was published, prohibiting discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in several areas. The preamble of the document includes that, in order to ensure the development of democratic and tolerant societies in which all people can participate, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, action in the field of discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin should go beyond access to self-employed and non-self-employed employment and cover areas such as education, social protection, including social security and healthcare, social advantages, access to and supply of goods and services.

In this context, Council Directive 2004/113/EC⁵ was published in 2004. It is focused on promoting equal access to and provision of goods and services in relevant situations. The aim of this directive has also demonstrated the desire to go beyond employment and social policy areas to achieve wider recognition of gender issues.

Since 2006, the European Union has reviewed a number of issues with regard to the existing set of rules and new directives have been published which sought to regulate the possible perspectives of gender equality even more widely and in line with changing societal needs⁶.

[tent/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31979L0007](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31979L0007).

³ Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31992L0085>.

⁴ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

⁵ COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services <https://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32004L0113>.

⁶ The important modifications: DIRECTIVE 2006/54/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) <https://eurlex.europa.eu/legal->

From 2010 onwards, in line with the European Union's equality strategy, the scope of the areas concerned was extended and Directive 2011/36/EU⁷ of the European Parliament and the Council⁸ was published, opening the way as a dimension in the fight against trafficking in human beings. This directive recognises the gender-specific nature of trafficking in human beings and the fact that men and women are trafficked for different purposes, thus raising awareness of the need for gender differences to be taken into account in assistance and support measures, where appropriate.

Finally, among the steps taken to broaden the areas of rules, the European Union has also taken steps to recognise equal opportunities in citizens' private lives, resulting in the adoption of a directive on work-life balance measures for parents and carers⁹. This document explicitly states that work-life balance policies should contribute to achieving gender equality by promoting women's participation in the labour market, the equal sharing of care responsibilities between men and women and the elimination of gender gaps in income and pay. The main problem in this area is the under-representation of women in the labour market, which is difficult to balance work and family responsibilities. In many cases, after having children, women are likely to work fewer hours in paid employment and spend more time fulfilling unpaid care responsibilities.

Work-life balance therefore remains a major challenge for many parents and workers with caring responsibilities, in particular, due to longer working hours and changing working time patterns, which adversely affect women's employment. Thus, the former aspects tried to illustrate the main areas and issues where the European Union has already tried to build the possibility of equal opportunities, but it can also be seen from the described and listed legal texts that all have been implemented in the form of directives. As a result, it was necessary to implement them in the Member States, which in many cases was successful, but the actual implementation took the form of different solutions¹⁰.

However, the implementation of the European Union's equal opportunities strategy is not only integrated into the everyday life of the Member States through the above-mentioned legal instruments, but we can also see significant results from the side of the Court's work. The Court of Justice of the European Union (hereinafter: CJEU) has interpreted the provisions of *acquis* in a number of cases based on disputes and difficulties of interpretation in the Member States. It may therefore also be important to present some relevant related cases in order to ensure a complete analysis. The main question in the Marschall-

[content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32010L0018](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32010L0018). Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32010L0041>.

7 Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0036>.

8 Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0036>.

9 Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU <https://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32019L1158>.

10 Of course, the European Union monitors the processes of implementation in the Member States, the results of which can also be found in the indicated sources for all the above-mentioned directives.

case¹¹ was whether a national rule discriminating positively against female workers in certain sectors where there are typically more men than women is contrary to EU law. In the present case, the CJEU did not find the Member State's solution unlawful, stating that male and female candidates with the same qualifications on the basis of their competence, competence and professional performance do not preclude national legislation which gives priority to female employees in such situations, provided that it is granted in each case to male applicants with the same qualifications as female applicants, that the proposal is assessed objectively which takes into account all criteria relating to the identity of the candidates and excludes any advantage for female candidates, provided that one or more criteria tip the balance in favour of the male candidate and that those criteria are not discriminatory in relation to female candidates. In the *Hakelbracht*-case¹², the national court searched for the answer to the question of whether the national legislation, in a situation where a person who considers himself to be the victim of discrimination on grounds of sex has lodged a complaint, an employee who supports him in that context is protected from retaliatory measures taken by his employer only if he or she has acted as a witness during the examination of that complaint, and his testimony complies with the formal requirements prescribed by the relevant regulations. In that judgment, the CJEU stated, in addition to its previous practice, that the principle of effective judicial review would be deprived of the essence of its effectiveness if the protection afforded by it did not extend to measures which an employer may take in response to an action brought by an employee to ensure compliance with the principle of equal treatment. The fear of similar measures, against which no judicial remedy is available, would risk discouraging workers who consider themselves victims of discrimination from enforcing their rights before the courts and, consequently, would seriously jeopardise the attainment of the objective pursued by the provisions of the directive under examination.

However, ensuring gender equality did not end with the processes described above. **There are still many areas where efficiency can be improved, or further action is needed. Among them are – undoubtedly – research and innovation.**

From 2022 onwards, all organisations applying for funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe programme for 2021-2027 (hereinafter: Horizon Europe, the Programme) will have to submit with their application a special questionnaire declaring that they have a gender equality plan (hereinafter: GEP, the plan).¹³ This declaration will later be considered in the entity's validation process.¹⁴ The introduction of the requirement to have a plan as an eligibility criterion stems from the legal basis of Horizon Europe, which recognises gender equality as one of its key objectives.

11 Case C-409/95. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A61995CJ0409>.

12 Case C-404/18.

<https://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?nat=or&mat=or&pcs=Oojur=C%2CT%2CF&num=C-404%252F18&for=&jge=&dates=&language=en&pro=&cit=none%252CC%252CCJ%252CR%252C2008E%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252C%252Ctrue%252Cfalse%252Cfalse&oqp=&td=%3BALL&avg=&lgrec=hu&lg=&page=1&cid=2118038>.

13 This is directly linked to the EU's adoption of a new *Multiannual Financial Framework* (MFF) for 2021-2027, implying a greater emphasis on gender mainstreaming in the EU budget. Council Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020, setting out the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027, Official Journal of the EU L1 433/11.

14 *Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans* (GEPs), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, September 2021, p. 7.

Recital 53 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and the Council of 28 April 2021, establishing the Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination¹⁵ provides that the activities developed under the Programme should aim to eliminate gender bias and inequalities, enhancing work-life balance and promoting equality between women and men in research and innovation (R&I), including the principle of equal pay without discrimination based on sex, in accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Articles 8 and 157 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The gender dimension should be included in R&I content and followed through at all stages of the research cycles. Furthermore, Programme activities should aim to eliminate inequalities and promote equality and diversity in all aspects of R&I with regard to age, disability, race and ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. One of the principles of Horizon Europe set out in Article 7 indicates that the Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of equal opportunities for all and the implementation of the gender dimension, including gender mainstreaming in R&I content. It shall aim to address the causes of gender imbalance. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring, to the extent possible, gender balance in evaluation panels and in other relevant advisory bodies such as boards and expert groups (paragraph 6).

Similarly, Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing the Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation¹⁶ considers strengthening the gender dimension as operational objectives of the Specific programme (the Article 2, par. 2, al. e). The implementation of the Specific Programme through the Strategic Plan shall contain, among others, specific issues, such as gender equality, and including the integration of the gender dimension in the R&I content (Article 6, par. 3, al. e).

Finally, Annex 1 of the European Commission's Implementing Decision C (2022)2975 of 10 May 2022 on the adoption of the work programme for 2021-2022 within the framework of the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and its financing as regards the 2022 budget explicitly provides that the introduction of a gender equality plan (GEP) as an eligibility criterion aims to support the implementation of sustainable institutional change for applicants. The Commission further stresses that research funders and providers have an essential role in raising awareness and integrating gender equality into their research and teaching content.¹⁷

As mentioned, the principle of gender equality is one of the fundamental, and at the same time considered 'founding', principles and values of the European Union, expressed in the primary law of the organisation. While, over the years, legislation, jurisprudence as well as amendments to the Treaties have contributed to an apparent strengthening of both the principle itself and its implementation in the EU, sustainable change requires the actions of a permanent and proactive

15 Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 (Text with EEA relevance) PE/12/2021/INIT. OJ L 170, 12.5.2021 (the Regulation).

16 Council Decision (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU.

17 Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans ..., p. 6.

nature. It should therefore come as no surprise that gender equality is now one of the priority areas of action for the European Commission for 2019-2024, as confirmed by the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.¹⁸

The GEP should therefore be considered as part of the European Employment Strategy, aimed at strengthening gender equality in the context of universities. It is also entirely consistent with the temporary specific measures aimed at levelling the playing field between the two sexes and making structural, social, and cultural changes to correct past and present forms and the effects of discrimination against women.¹⁹

Although it is only now that having a GEP has been made a prerequisite to be eligible for funding in Horizon Europe Programme, the need to include *gender mainstreaming* policies in the field of research was already signalled more than a decade ago. In July 2012, the Commission issued a communication advocating the need for action to establish and implement principles to guarantee gender equality in all areas of academic life in order to 'end the waste of talent we cannot afford, the diversity of views and attitudes in research and the implementation of quality.'²⁰ The communication highlights the considerable loss and inefficient use of highly skilled women in the European research area (including the decision-making process and the design, evaluation, and implementation of research). What is particularly noteworthy, the Commission has not limited itself to formulate the legal and political expectations for the Member States (including the adoption of gender equality plans), but committed itself to ensure 40% of the under-represented sex in all its expert groups, panels and committees and to apply this particularly under Horizon 2020. Finally, Horizon 2020 was the first framework programme to recognise gender as a *cross-cutting priority*,²¹ while the integration of the gender dimension into research and innovation (R&I) content was intended to ensure that the biological and social/cultural characteristics of both women and men, as well as gender equality objectives, are included as relevant in the context of research and innovation projects.

A gender equality plan (GEP) can be defined as a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through institutional and cultural change.²²

18 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on A Union of Equality: *Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*. COM/2020/152 final.

19 CEDAW Committee (2004). *General Recommendation No 25 on Article 4, paragraph 1 – Temporary Special Measures*, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/Recommendations.aspx> (access: 12.11.2022) and K. Sękowska-Kozłowska, *Między obowiązkiem a przyzwoleniem. Środki wyrównawcze na rzecz kobiet jako instrument realizacji praw człowieka [Between duty and consent. Compensatory measures for women as an instrument for achieving human rights]*, Warszawa 2021, passim.

20 A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth, Brussels, 17.7.2012, COM(2012) 392 final.

21 European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Gendered innovations: how inclusive analysis contributes to research and innovation*, Publications Office, 2020, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/619077> (access: 3.10.2022).

22 Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans ..., p. 5.

Typically, a gender plan implies establishing and making effective a set of basic principles to safeguard gender equality in all the spheres of academic life²³. A gender equality plan does not have a universal template,²⁴ as the set of actions will depend on the type of organisation, the sector of activity, the anti-discrimination measures taken to date and the type of gender bias and inequality identified in the diagnostic within the organisation. However, as part of its guidance published in September 2021, **the Commission identified four mandatory process-related requirements that a GEP must meet.**²⁵ They apply to Horizon Europe's eligibility criterion but can be perceived as universal, as they can apply to both R&I and other (non-R&I) entities that aim to establish such a plan.

Firstly, **the gender equality plan must meet formal requirements.** It must be a formal document published on the institution's website, signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution. The plan should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them. It is left to the institution itself to define the particular objectives and actions.

The gender equality plan requires the identification of the persons responsible for implementing it (dedicated resources and expertise in gender equality). Establishing a GEP requires the creation of a specific framework (organisational and financial) and it is up to the organisation to decide what is necessary and within which structures it will support a permanent process of sustainable organisational change to strengthen the principle of gender equality.

The implementation of a gender equality plan also requires data collection and monitoring. The organisation must collect sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel and students and prepare the annual report based on these indicators. Because the GEP is "tailored" to the specific needs of the organisation, each organisation decides for itself how to select the most relevant indicators, how to collect and analyse the data, including resources to do so, and ensure that the data is published and monitored on an annual basis. The data collected should support the objectives and targets in the plan and the evaluation of the gender equality implementation process.

The fourth essential element of a gender equality plan is training. The GEP must include awareness-raising and training actions on gender equality. These activities should engage the whole organisation and be an evidence-based, ongoing, and long-term process. Training should also cover unconscious gender biases aimed at staff and decision-makers. It should also address communication activities within the organisation and include training on gender equality that focuses on specific topics targeted at all or selected groups.

23 V. F. A. Barros, R. M. Vasconcelos, E. Araújo, L. Amaral and I. Ramos, *A Positive Perspective to Implementation of a Gender Equality Plan: a question of design, time and participation*, 2018 IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE), San Jose, CA, USA, 2018, pp. 1-5, doi: 10.1109/FIE.2018.8659112.

24 However, within the framework of the GEPARD project, which is being carried out within a consortium of several European universities, the development of a Universal Gender Equality Plan is envisaged (as one of the project results), though this is not so much a solution that can be applied everywhere due to the reproducibility of the adopted solutions, as a range of possibilities that allow for the construction of a gender equality plan that is in line with the needs and expectations of a specific institution (for more details, see point IV).

25 Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans ..., p. 5.

In addition to these four mandatory requirements, **the Commission**, following the assumptions of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, **also identifies five suggested thematic areas to be considered by R&I institutions in their GEPs. They cover the following issues:**

- **work-life balance and organisational culture,**
- **gender balance in leadership and equal participation of women and men in decision-making,**
- **gender equality in recruitment and career progression,**
- **integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content,**
- **measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.**

! For further details see par. 4 of this report

The Commission also emphasised this in the September 2021 guidance cited earlier, indicating that an effective GEP should be based on a model of change that identifies the problems to be addressed, and defines their causes and desired outcomes, including targets. It should also detail the actions required to achieve the objectives and indicators to monitor progress. The GEP should involve the whole organisation, whether senior management, all staff, students and PhD students (in the case of a teaching organisation), or other stakeholders. It should also shape an ongoing process that encourages self-reflection and a review of actions taken and practices adopted.

The Commission's guidelines are universal and, therefore, also general. Setting up a gender equality plan for an organisation, including a university, will therefore depend on identified problems and areas requiring support, in order to construct the most appropriate (and at the same time feasible) proposals for solutions.

1.2 Methodology for developing and implementing a gender equality plan (GEP) – brief overview

A characteristic feature of the EU as an organisation is – in addition to creating commitments – a kind of “prompting” of the addressees as to what actions need to be taken for specific standards to be effectively implemented. With regard to gender equality in R&I, the GEAR tool is an example of this approach. It has been in operation since 2015 and it has been built mainly on the experience of gender-specific projects funded under Horizon 2020.²⁶

The creation of a gender equality plan in a university is, in many cases, an unprecedented issue, being the aftermath of the introduction of a new eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe in 2022. This means the tool itself also had to be updated and adapted to current standards. As a result, today, the GEAR tool is a compendium of knowledge on what gender equality plans are and who should be involved in their creation, why the creation of a GEP is necessary to achieve sustainable change, how to “step by step” create such a plan, and, finally, where to look for legal standards in this area, as well as examples of good practice.

²⁶ Gender Equality in Academia and Research – GEAR tool: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear> (access: 10.11.2022).

Concerning universities,²⁷ the GEAR tool suggests taking the following steps:²⁸

1. Understanding the context of the institution for which the gender equality plan is to be created,²⁹ identifying the people and capacities (both inside and outside the university) that can support the creation of the plan, and understanding how the change process works according to the logic of the *gender mainstreaming cycle*;³⁰
2. Analysing and assessing the *status quo* in the institution – an initial diagnosis of the personnel, skills, financial and technical resources, and then defining: the context, the legal and political framework in which the higher education institutions (HEI) operates, the gender equality measures and activities implemented so far in the HEI (if any), and finally an in-depth diagnosis and a comparison of the results with the situation in other HEIs in the country and abroad; this stage aims to identify challenges and goals, i.e. to identify the key areas of impact for the GEP,³¹ in order to be able to also evaluate the changes achieved on this basis in the future (monitoring and evaluation strategy);
3. **The creation of a gender equality plan** (*For further details see par. 2.1. of this report and UGEP - Gepard toolkit (gepard-project.eu)* – planning specific actions based on the results of the diagnosis carried out, the resources available, and the Commission’s guidelines concerning eligibility criteria, while always bearing in mind that the plan should be holistic and integrated (both internally and with critical documents and processes in the University);³² it is also stressed that the involvement of top management and rational prioritisation is vital at this stage;

27 Separate guidance has been prepared for research funding organisations.

28 Gender equality in academia and research step-by-step guide for research organisations, universities and public bodies: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/step-step-guide> (access: 10.11.2022).

29 These include location, history, economic situation, management objectives and priorities, structure, policies, organisational culture, size and the legal framework in which the institution operates.

30 There are four phases: define, plan, act and check.

31 This stage first requires a decision as to who should be involved in carrying out the analysis (a specialised unit/bodies or a dedicated and formally mandated team), then an examination of the legal framework and national strategies (including financial strategies) for the integration of gender equality in research and higher education (if any), a kind of ‘internal audit’ of the institution (here, for example, a questionnaire developed within the framework of the SAGE project can be used), finally, the definition of the indicators to be taken into account in the diagnosis, the methodology for carrying out quantitative and qualitative research, and the evaluation of their results against the background of comparable studies. The questionnaire developed as part of the SAGE project https://www.sage-growingequality.eu/web/assets/media/tools/audit_guidelines.pdf (access: 10.11.2022), and finally, the definition of indicators to be taken into account in the diagnosis, the methodology for carrying out quantitative and qualitative research, and the evaluation of their results against comparable organisation.

32 It is important to remember that the plan has to address issues that are relevant to the whole community in order for the change to have a chance of being sustainable. Thus, several essential elements should be taken into account when setting up the GEP: objectives, measurable, indicators, targets, timelines, and responsibilities. To this end, it is also recommended, among other things, that the work on the plan should be participatory, that objectives and actions should be defined using the SMART method, that good practices of others should be taken as inspiration and that existing resources should be rationalised for the GEP (significant change at a relatively small cost), that the plan should be an evolutionary and dynamic document, that the responsibilities of the various actors for implementing the various elements of the plan should be clearly indicated within a specific time frame, that the circle of stakeholders supporting the plan should be permanently widened, and finally that actions and processes should be planned for the long term with a view to sustainable use of existing resources. The results of the PLOTINA project can be beneficial in developing the plan: <https://www.plotina.eu/plotina-formative-toolkit/> (access: 10.11.2022).

4. Implementation of the plan – the implementation by the team³³ created for this purpose and according to the agreed timetable of the planned activities, which – in order to ensure the sustainability of the change at the University – should be institutionalised to the highest possible degree and widely disseminated; it is also recommended that training and awareness-raising activities should not be abandoned during the implementation phase of the plan and that the resources (knowledge and skills) of those outside the team directly responsible for implementing the plan should continue to be drawn upon;
5. Monitoring progress and evaluation of the plan – verifying, based on the monitoring and evaluation strategy prepared at the diagnosis stage, the effectiveness of the actions undertaken and the scale of the impact of the plan on achieving the changes proposed (while emphasising the need to distinguish between the monitoring and evaluation objectives). It should also be noted that Horizon Europe requires annual monitoring reports, while the results of this stage, in order to strengthen the position of the plan itself and ensure the cyclical nature of the change, should be widely disseminated;
6. Promoting gender equality in the University after the plan has been implemented – ongoing efforts to maintain the standards developed in the plan (to avoid regression and a return to previous undesirable practices), identifying new areas (e.g. intersectionality) and strategies (e.g. gender budgeting), as well as identifying best practices and constraints to improve the next plan.

The tool also suggests what factors are conducive to developing and implementing a plan, and how to overcome the most common obstacles and challenges to implementing gender equality strategies in universities.

Inspired by the logic and clarity of the GEAR tool, we decided to add to it some elements that can make it easier to overcome the various steps recommended above. Among them, we should point out first of all the **UGEP**, as a tool that significantly facilitates the creation (or revision) of the GEP. A second element is also the **recommendations for project partners (for further details see par. 2.2 of this report and appendix 1)**, which can specifically improve understanding of the context in which the institution is situated, assess the state of affairs, and facilitate the evaluation of the equality and diversity policies implemented to date. Finally, directly addressing methodological issues is the second result of the GEPARD project, the **methodological guide**.



³³ The team should be knowledgeable about: driving organisational change, dealing with resistance, building support networks, the gender aspect of research careers, decision-making and content of research and teaching, self-assessment, monitoring, and data gathering and analysis, the specifics and functioning of one's institution. The team should also meet regularly with those in decision-making functions, with a view to both discussing progress on an ongoing basis, situations of resistance to proposed changes, and identifying areas where adjustments to the plan will be necessary due to various circumstances. The purpose of monitoring is the continuous and systematic collection of data (mainly quantitative) so that management has ongoing knowledge of the concrete progress in implementing the plan ('outputs'). The purpose of evaluation, on the other hand, is to objectively assess the plan's effectiveness based on the (mainly qualitative) monitoring data so that lessons can be learned for planning future activities. Solutions developed by the TARGET project can be helpful at this stage: http://www.gendertarget.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/741672_TARGET_Monitoring_Tool_D4.pdf (access: 10.11.2022).

1.3. GEP policy within an international consortium of the GEPARD Project

1.3.1 The Gender Equality Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice³⁴

The University of Silesia was one of the first universities in Poland (and the first in the Silesian Voivodeship) to develop and implement a Gender Equality Plan in 2021.³⁵ There is no doubt that the new eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe contributed to the intensification of work on the document. At the same time, it should be underlined that the equality policy implemented at the university presupposed strategic action in this area (resulting, among others, from the university's statutory regulations in force as an employer, the values indicated in paragraph 4 of the statute³⁶ and the declaration on being an equal and diverse community³⁷).

The initial conceptual work started back in October 2020. It mainly focused on analysing the broadly understood legal context and the GEPs arrangements in place at other universities (domestic and foreign) and identifying the specific challenges and goals facing the University of Silesia. At this stage, the voluntary participation of its members in trainings on how to prepare equality plans that meet the requirements of the Commission played a particular role. A great deal of time was also devoted to analysing the qualitative research findings on discrimination and unequal treatment at the University of Silesia³⁸ along with the quantitative data developed and made available by the Education Department, the Doctoral School, and the HR Department.

In April 2021, by order of the Rector of the University of Silesia, a team for developing the Gender Equality Plan for the University of Silesia was officially appointed. It comprised nearly twenty people and consisted of academics and support staff, as well as students and doctoral students, representing various academic disciplines and fields and located at different levels of the university hierarchy. Significantly, the work on the plan was chaired by the vice-rector for staff development (a female). Based on the diagnosis results and the identification of best practices at other, more advanced universities, key objectives and challenges were identified for the University of Silesia, which were to be tackled by the university's first-ever GEP. As a result, the first version of the plan was proposed in September 2021, which was subjected to large-scale consultations with various reference groups: working and studying at the university and two trade unions active at the university (ZNP and Solidarność). Based on the comments and suggestions, a second version of the plan was prepared, which was again consulted and improved. The plan's third (final) version was submitted to the

34 Torbus U, Póltorak M., GENDER EQUALITY PLAN FOR R&I. OBSERVATIONS BASED ON THE INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SILESIA IN KATOWICE, *Roczniki Administracji i Prawa* 2022; 4(XXII): 51-69, <https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0016.3315> pp. 62-65.

35 <https://naukawpolsce.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C91165%2Cuniwersytet-slaski-wdraza-plan-rownosci-plci.html> (access: 10.11.2022).

36 *The Statute of the University of Silesia in Katowice*, adopted by the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice on 28 May 2019 (the consolidated text constitutes an appendix to the announcement of the Rector of the University of Silesia in Katowice of 1 July 2021).

37 *Declaration of the University of Silesia – on being an equal and diverse community*, available at: <https://us.edu.pl/en/uczelnia/rowne-traktowanie/#read-more> (access: 10.11.2022).

38 *Report on a survey of female and male employees and PhD students on discrimination and unequal treatment at the University of Silesia* and *Report on a survey of female and male students at the University of Silesia on discrimination and unequal treatment*. The content of both reports is available at: <https://us.edu.pl/en/uczelnia/rowne-traktowanie/raporty-z-badan-opinii-wspolnoty-us> (access: 28.11.2022).

University Senate for its opinion on 30 November 2021. Following the favourable opinion of the Senate on 7 December 2021, the Rector of the University of Silesia issued a decree (No 212/2021), enforcing the plan with legal force.

The **Gender Equality Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice** meets all the requirements of the European Commission: it is a formal document, signed by the university's top management (the Rector), and has been actively communicated to the academic community.³⁹ The plan contains a commitment to gender equality and sets clear objectives and detailed actions and measures to achieve them.

The Gender Equality Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice has an evolving and participatory character, which means that the whole community of the university can contribute to its form and implementation. Further diagnoses and analyses of the conditions for the development of all persons forming the university community will also be essential in improving the GEP. The plan formulates objectives and actions in the following areas (suggested by the Commission): science and education, recruitment and career development, organisational culture and the work-life-learning balance, management and decision making and safety. Strategic objectives, operational objectives, target groups, examples of specific actions and monitoring and sources of verification have been formulated for each area.

As for the timeline, for 2022 it was planned to assess the situation, conditions, and needs for gender equality and equivalence, and to develop an agenda for equality actions and procedures or to revise the existing ones. In 2023, the intention was to implement the planned actions and conduct an internal evaluation of planned and implemented actions, together with a revision of the developed detailed plan. Finally, in 2024, the implementation of the planned activities will be continued, and the evaluation and validation of the Gender Equality Plan of the University of Silesia in Katowice for 2022-2024 will be carried out.

However, given the ambitious goals of the Plan, the multitude of tasks it envisages, and the desire to be better prepared for the adoption of the new plan, the University Commission for Equality and Diversity recommended to the Rector of the University of Silesia to extend the implementation of the current plan until the end of 2025.

1.3.2. The Gender Equality Plan at the L-Università ta' Malta

The **University of Malta (UM) Gender+ Equity Plan** was formally approved by the UM Senate on the 20th of January 2022 and by the UM Council on the 17th of February of the same year. The University of Malta adopted a gender- plus approach in order to incorporate the main tenets mentioned in the section entitled Societal Factors and Impacts listed in the UM Strategic Plan 2020-2025⁴⁰. For this reason, an equality, diversity and inclusion framework was adopted, taking into consideration sex, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and non-traditional characteristics.

³⁹ In addition to posting the document on the equal treatment website: <https://us.edu.pl/en/uczelnia/rowne-traktowanie/plan-rownosci-plci/> (access: 18.11.2022), information on the adoption and implementation of the US GEP is communicated through the university newsletter and via social media.

⁴⁰ L-Università ta' Malta (2020). Strategic Plan 2020-2025. <https://www.um.edu.mt/media/um/docs/about/strategy/UMStrategicPlan2020-2025.pdf>, page 5.

The main tenets adopted in the UM Equity Plan were in line with Malta's national legislation, including:

- Chapter 413 - Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) (Amendment) Act⁴¹
- Chapter 452 - Employment and Relations Act⁴²
- Subsidiary Legislation 460.15 - Equal Treatments of Persons Order⁴³
- Chapter 456 Equality for Men and Women Act of 2015⁴⁴

The design of the first UM Equity Plan took around two years to draft before it took its present form. The first plan was proposed by the Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee (GESDC) in 2021. Prior to this, the committee had evaluated some of the policies and measures in use at the University of Malta. Available statistical data was also analysed in order to find out what needed to be focused upon within the plan. The results elicited from this exercise were compiled within the Gender Audit Report 2018-2020.⁴⁵ The main issues which emerged from this study were shared with UM stakeholders. Any suggestions or recommendations which emerged from these meetings were incorporated within the Equity Plan. Other recommendations came from the GESDC members who consulted a number of international gender equality plans in order to help them in their endeavour.

The Equity plan helped bring together the UM committees which focused separately on discrimination and other issues related to sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, and ethnicity. Previously, these had tended to work in silos. The formulation of the Equity plan helped to integrate the work of all these Committees which came to realise that working together and at the same time separately, would help promote equality, diversity and inclusion among both students and staff if they adopted an intersectional approach. It was also agreed that an intersectional approach would be adopted, when possible, in the key areas recommended by Horizon Europe.⁴⁶

The UM Gender+ Equity Plan is geared towards academic staff: resident, visiting and casual; administrative staff; alumni; contractors; other supporting staff such as estate workers, messengers, maintenance, etc.; researchers; students; technical staff and visitors. For the plan to work, a number of structures needed to be set up such as the Equity Committee and Equity Office. The most important step was the decision to employ somebody to oversee the implementation of the plan; an Equity Officer was recruited in 2022. The Equity Officer was provided with additional administrative staff in 2023. The Equity Officer has the role of establishing an equity implementation team with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the Gender+ Equity Plan (G+EP). The Equity Working Group (EQWG) includes representatives from the different sectors studying or working at the university. The members of the working group are appointed by the Rector to include representatives of different staff

41 Government of Malta (2000). <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/413/eng/pdf>

42 Government of Malta (2002). <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/452/eng/pdf>

43 Government of Malta (2007). <https://legislation.mt/eli/sl/460.15/eng/pdf>

44 Government of Malta (2003). <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/456/eng/pdf>

45 GESDC (2022). <https://www.um.edu.mt/media/um/docs/about/equity/genderauditreport2018-2020.pdf>

46 GESDC. (2022). Gender+ Equity Plan Presentation. <https://www.um.edu.mt/media/um/docs/about/equity/EquityPlanpresentation.pdf>

groups (lecturers, admin, researchers, technical staff, and other), and students. The working groups for staff are composed of Deans or their equivalent, faculty managers, administrative directors, and other representatives. When it comes to the student working group, it consists of student representatives deriving from different academic faculties, centres, institutes, or schools, representatives from the Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (students; union), and other stakeholders. The Equity Committee, in turn, monitors the implementation of the plan.

In 2022, GESDC shared the UM Equity Plan with representatives from other higher education institutions in Malta. During this meeting, it became clear that the UM Gender+ Equity plan was the only plan established by a Maltese institution which had incorporated equality, diversity and inclusion within its plan. It also became clear that Maltese-based higher education institutions and research centres designed gender equality plans in response to Horizon Europe ‘dictates’, rather than in response to national law directives. This came later, when the Gender Mainstreaming Unit in its first Gender Equality Mainstreaming Strategy and Equality Action Plan⁴⁷ which came out at the end of 2022, stipulated that educational institutions were required to have their own gender equality plan in place.

1.3.3. The Gender Equality Plan at the University of Miskolc

The University of Miskolc applies several measures to ensure gender equality in accordance with the European Union’s goals and to meet the requirements of Hungarian legislation. The basic objective is to prevent or eliminate direct or indirect discrimination against university citizens on grounds of gender. During the development of **GEP**, the University of Miskolc made efforts to ensure that the measures affect the widest possible circle of persons in connection with the operation of the university. This means that the personal scope of the measures includes employees of the university, no matter to working areas, lecturers, researchers, and students of the university. In implementing the GEP, the European Commission has established four mandatory and five optional criteria. Mandatory criteria are the availability of equal opportunity measures, data collection and monitoring activities, the allocation of appropriate resources, and the provision of training. Optional elements include developing an organisational culture that supports work-life balance, ensuring gender equality in decision-making and management positions, ensuring gender equality in recruitment and promotion, gender studies in education and research, and measures against sexual harassment. When developing its equality plan, the University of Miskolc was committed to fulfilling the four mandatory criteria and also made several commitments to ensure optional elements. In line with its institutional development plan, the university sets a strategic goal to increase the number of female teachers and researchers, primarily in underrepresented fields and leadership positions. It also aims to promote women’s participation in the labour market and a good work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, and the development of infrastructural background for family-friendly higher education. During the latest revision, measures were extended to include the development and monitoring of women’s health-related employment rules, and measures were taken to join Men’s Health Month programs. The measures aim to ensure a higher level of gender equality

⁴⁷ Human Rights Directorate (2022). <https://humanrights.gov.mt/en/Documents/Gender%20Equality.pdf>

at the University.

To ensure the organizational background, the Equal Opportunities Committee of the University of Miskolc was established simultaneously with the creation of the equality plan, whose task is complex. In particular, it gives its opinion on measures, makes proposals, initiates the necessary measures, and performs monitoring and control tasks. However, the implementation of the GEP has a complex institutional background. In addition to the Equal Opportunities Committee, a disability coordinator and an equal opportunities officer also participate, as well as the university's employer's managers and the HR Department assist in the development and implementation of the plan.

Regular data collection is an essential condition for achieving the goals. The University of Miskolc has made the review of the gender equality plan mandatory every two years. During the last review (2023), it was found that 52% of the employees at the University of Miskolc are female, however, significant disproportions can still be observed between technical and other sciences and other organizational units. The audit also pointed out that, compared to previous data, an improvement can be observed in the case of higher-ranking management positions, however, when breaking down the data at the faculty level, a deterioration in the proportion of female trainers can be observed in underrepresented areas, typically in technical faculties. Accordingly, in light of the data, the University remains committed to introducing and applying measures that promote the improvement of areas with worse trends.

The research team of the University of Miskolc joined the research of the GEPARD program from the very beginning. The members of the research group represent the academic sphere primarily from the social sciences, and one of them is a member of the university's equal opportunities committee. He is also the university's equality officer. The own research carried out within the framework of the programme, as well as the results presented by researchers from other participating institutions, will help the further development of the university's GEP.

1.3.4. The Gender Equality Plan at the University of Cyprus

European University Cyprus (EUC) adopted its first Gender Equality Plan (EUC-GEP) in December 2021, after approval by the University Senate and ratification by the University Council. **The present plan**⁴⁸ details the University's gender equality goals for the period January 2022 - December 2024, which focus on the following interrelated areas: a. Work-life balance and organisational culture, b. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making, c. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression, d. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content, and e. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment. For each of the five thematic areas, the EUC-GEP includes a brief description and aim, an assessment of the current situation through quantitative and qualitative baseline data, and the course of action with objectives, actions, and indicators. The Plan targets mainly university employees – both academic and administrative – at all levels.

EUC has always considered the adoption of practices that promote diversity,

⁴⁸ The full EUC-GEP is available on the University's Intranet area "Rectorate Office: Internal Regulations".

inclusiveness, equality, and cooperation as a necessary prerequisite for success in education and research. The University's commitment to these values was already evident during the assessment phase of the EUC-GEP's development. Equality was already considered a non-negotiable core value of our University, while zero tolerance to all forms of discrimination was, and continues to be, at the forefront of the institution's operations as evidenced by the University Charter⁴⁹. Nonetheless, the European Commission's mandate for the development of institutional Gender Equality Plans as an eligibility criterion for participation in the Horizon Europe Programme was decisive in the development of a more formal and structured plan.

The task of drafting the EUC-GEP was assigned to the Office of the Vice-Rector of Research and International Relations by the Rector in Spring 2021. In turn, the task was assigned to the Head of the EUC Research Office who has an academic background in gender studies. After the development of the initial draft, a group of gender experts within the University formed an informal team under the lead of the Research Office's Head, which assessed, expanded, and reviewed the plan accordingly. In December 2021, a Senate Ad-Hoc Committee on Gender Equality was established following the recommendation of the Vice-Rector of Research and External Affairs. The implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the EUC-GEP falls under the responsibility of the aforementioned Committee. The composition of the Committee on Gender Equality is as follows:

- Vice-Rector of Research and External Affairs (Chair)
- Faculty members: One representative from each School (preferably with gender expertise)
- Representative of the Research Office
- Representative of Human Resources
- Representative of the Senate Committee on Internal Quality Assurance
- Representative of the Student Union

The Committee's responsibilities include: awareness raising and facilitation for the promotion of EUC-GEP within the university community, including faculty, researchers, administrators, and students; the development and execution of a Communication Plan; monitoring of implementation; identification of obstacles and provision of suggestions to overcome them; evaluation of the final outcomes and provision of recommendations for future actions that could further contribute to gender equality.

The development of a GEP was welcomed by the top decision-makers for several other reasons. First, European University of Cyprus places a great emphasis on investing in its people, as illustrated by its numerous awards and accreditations⁵⁰. Indeed, the current GEP demonstrates the University's commitment, not only to gender equality but also to the continuous enhancement of an organizational culture where everybody can fulfil their true potential and achieve a healthy work-life balance. At the same time, with research and innovation (R&I) being one of the University's current strategic priorities, the enhancement of policies and

⁴⁹ https://euc.ac.cy/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EUC.Charter_18.10.2018.pdf

⁵⁰ See <https://euc.ac.cy/en/about-us/our-people/>, "A Great Place to Work" certification (<https://euc.ac.cy/en/euc-is-a-great-place-to-work/>) and the 'HR Excellence in Research' logo (<https://euc.ac.cy/en/research/the-human-resources-strategy-for-researchers-hrs4r/>)

practices toward gender equality can substantially contribute to EUC's success and its transformation into a leading regional hub of academic excellence. Last, but not least, it is expected that the GEP Actions will have a significant effect on students at all levels, both through the improvement of curriculum design and teaching and through "service to the community", which is considered the third pillar of the University's excellence, along with teaching and research.

1.3.5. The Gender Equality Activities at the University of Salerno

On a national scale, Italian Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito (MIUR) has recently produced a document entitled "Indications for positive actions of the Ministry of Education on gender issues in universities and research", containing a series of specific recommendations for universities. In this perspective, the University is called into question as a training and research institution to implement a series of actions and behaviors aimed at guaranteeing equality between men and women and to become a promoter more generally of an inclusive culture and respectful of all identity differences.

An inclusive university is attentive to identity needs and values differences, and promotes individual, social, and organizational well-being; it is a place where no one (students, teaching staff, technical-administrative staff), due to the characteristics of their identity, should feel not valued, supported or discriminated against. This inevitably passes through paths of knowledge of the scientifically correct constructs at the basis of gender equality and gender equality, through the deconstruction of those stereotypes and prejudices that are the basis of manifestations and phenomena of discrimination and prevarication, and through the identification of obstacles that prevent gender equality between individuals and the identification of appropriate actions aimed at overcoming them.

Over the years, the University of Salerno (Campania, Italy) has approved and promoted a series of actions and objectives, in line with the University's strategic planning, to overcome barriers and gender gaps in the context of the academic community and territorial, in every area and at every level. The planned interventions, from work-life balance measures to the analysis of decision-making and leadership processes, to the gender dimensions in research, teaching, and the third mission, aim both to continue and give coherence to policies already undertaken and to rethink the organizational culture and innovative strategies to foster structural change and promote equal opportunities and the enhancement of diversity.

1. The "Unique Guarantee Committee for Equal Opportunities" (Comitato Unico di Garanzia per le pari opportunità, la valorizzazione del benessere di chi lavora e contro le discriminazioni - CUG)⁵¹ is a new institution established by Law 183/2010 (art. 21) and presents itself as a guarantee institution that extends its operation to any form of direct or indirect discrimination that derives from the various risk factors set out in European legislation: gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, disability and language, and which is expressed in the areas of work, training, career progression, and safety.

It has an equal composition and assumes - unifying them - all the functions that the law, collective agreements, and other provisions attributed to the Equal

⁵¹ <https://www.cug.unisa.it/home/mission>

Opportunities and Mobbing Committees.

The Committee promotes the creation of a work environment based on respect, the enhancement of differences, the implementation of the principles of equal opportunities, and organizational well-being, and contrasting any form of discrimination and moral or psychological violence against female workers and of workers. It operates with proactive, consultative, and verification actions on all matters of competence.

To this end:

- promotes initiatives aimed at implementing and spreading a culture of Equal Opportunities;
- prepares plans of positive actions, interventions, and projects to promote substantial equality at work between men and women;
- organizes fact-finding surveys on the working climate, gender analysis on the needs of women and men (eg. gender balance), and adoption of ethical and conduct codes aimed at preventing or removing situations of discrimination, violence, or mobbing, with particular regard to gender discrimination;
- proposes actions aimed at promoting work-life balance policies;
- proposes initiatives aimed at implementing EU directives and national legislation for the affirmation of the equal dignity of people at work;
- favors the exchange of good practices, knowledge, or experiences, on possible issues in the context of Equal Opportunities;
- proposes training interventions aimed at the personnel on the pertinent issues;
- proposes interventions for the adoption of a gender-friendly language;
- proposes useful actions to promote conditions of working well-being.

2. The “Observatory for the Dissemination of Gender Studies and the Culture of Equal Opportunities”⁵²(Osservatorio per la diffusione degli studi di Genere e la cultura delle Pari Opportunità (OGEPO) was set up in 2011, in line with the positive action plan, implemented since 2006 by the University Equal Opportunities Commission. Since 2014 (with D.R. Prot. 71928 of 18/12/2014; Rep. N. 4109/2014) it has been recognized in all respects as an Interdepartmental Center and has as its purpose:

- promote research and discussion on gender studies and statistics, equality, and equal opportunities, the presence of women in history, their representation in society, as well as legal issues, historical, social, economic, political, and cultural, inherent to these issues. To this end, it carries out interdisciplinary collaborations between teachers and experts, articulating comparisons in the various scientific and humanistic areas;
- strengthen the documentation and information activities of the Documentation Center on Gender and Equal Opportunities - whose acquired skills are made available to subjects and institutions - included in the Observatory, of which it is an integral part, for the following purposes:

⁵² <https://www.unisa.it/areavii/cpo/osservatorio#english>

1. a general catalog of documentary and bibliographic materials, relating to Gender Culture and Equal Opportunities or related to them, existing in the libraries and various bodies of the University of Salerno, as well as scattered throughout the territory of Salerno and its province;
 2. a help desk for information, advice, and guidance on issues relating to the reconciliation of work and lifetimes, rights, services, health, work, career, training, families, legislation, culture, free time, etc.
 3. activate an online FORUM that connects the University of Salerno on the provincial, regional, national, and international territory, through networks of relationships, governed by agreements and conventions with associations, and public and private bodies, aimed at the exchange and circulation of information, as well as the planning of interventions on such issues. This Forum is included in the Observatory, of which it is an integral part, in order to offer interpretations and operational tools useful for specific interventions on gender issues, and equal opportunities, as well as to promote greater awareness of social actors in the area and foster dialogue between genders and generations;
- organize, promote, and sponsor training courses and educational initiatives to spread, both on the training and the work level, sensitivity against all forms of discrimination, direct and indirect, relating to gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, disability, religion or language;
 - participate in national, European, and international research projects specifically aimed at open, continuous, and online training on issues relating to gender, sexual orientation, culture of tolerance, and integration;
 - carry out interdisciplinary collaborations between teachers and experts, Italian and foreign, in order to promote discussion on the role of women in today's society, as well as favor the integration of the gender perspective in various study and in-depth courses;
 - periodically publish, in electronic format, studies on the topics covered by Gender Studies.

3. GenderLAB - GEP (**University Gender Equality Plan**)⁵³. The adoption of the Gender Equality Plan is an important testimony of the institutional commitment of the University of Salerno in the prevention and contrast of discrimination, stereotypes, and inequalities, and in the construction of active policies for the promotion of gender equality, a global challenge of UN Agenda 2030 and key objective of the European Union also promoted by the Horizon Europe Framework Program for research and innovation. Since 2013, the laboratory has been mainly reserved for gender studies, and its main objective is the concrete application of the products of the studies for educational purposes, closely linked to professional training, with particular attention to the relationship with the territory.

It has its own agile internal regulation, in compliance with the guidelines of the "OGEPO" and of the "CUG"; it has a small but qualified library whose volumes are cataloged according to the criteria of gender studies; it has its own historical archive of materials relating to Equal Opportunities in UniSa (years 2000-2011)

⁵³ <https://www.dipsum.unisa.it/dipartimento/strutture?id=271>

of which an inventory project is underway, as well as a current archive. In addition to the DIPSUM website, the GenderLab is hosted within the “OGEPO” website with its own web page. Among the activities promoted:

- support for the organization of seminars on topical issues of gender studies (eg: gender violence, female entrepreneurship, feminist literature, sexist language, women’s history, family history and sociology, LGBTQI studies, etc.);
- support for bibliographic research and degree theses in historical disciplines, with particular reference to the history of women and gender studies.

1.3.6. The Gender Equality Plan at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg

The guiding principles of the GEP are derived from the provisions of the Federal Equal Opportunities Act. This law applies to public universities and Higher Education Institutions run by the state, not to private universities. These are governed by a different legal basis. The GEP, more precisely the Plan for the Advancement of Women, applicable at the University of Salzburg is part of the **statute** of the University. It is published on the website of the University and thus it is accessible for everybody. According to § 19 University Act 2002, each University must adopt a statute. In the University of Salzburg, the senate decides with a simple majority based on a proposal by the Rector.

Part IV of the Statute contains provisions for the advancement of women and measures against discrimination. It addresses all university organs and fora and covers all persons working and studying at the University of Salzburg even if they are not formally employed.

Several units and fora with tasks related to the advancement of women and securing non-discrimination are established, and different tasks and powers are allocated to them.

There is an administrative unit (Gendup - Centre for Gender Studies and Women’s Advancement) responsible for the management of gender studies and other administrative functions. This unit has its legal basis in § 84 Statute. The tasks are enumerated there. They include the curricular conception, organisation of the teaching programme, and evaluation of the Gender Studies programme in accordance with the proposals made by the interdisciplinary expert council. As explained below the gender studies curriculum is also established by the gender professor. Tasks also include personnel suggestions for the specific supervision of teaching, advising students and external lecturers on gender studies, and networking of gender teaching within the university as well as networking with non-university institutions. Other tasks are the participation in the education and training and career planning of university staff, promotion and support of scientific projects in the field of women’s and gender research, and measures to promote women scientists and young scientists, in particular in EU projects.

Gendup has to implement the proposals made by the independent expert council. This has led to different interpretations of the tasks to be carried out by Gendup and on the division of powers between the two institutions. This did not help promote gender equality. There is a need to structure the cooperation of the

various fora which carry out functions in gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

According to the GEP, an independent expert council (IER) is responsible for academic work. This is e.g. the decision on which courses are included into the gender studies curriculum and the selection and decision about gender-related prizes.

Regarding curricula development, it has to be mentioned that only recently the professor for gender equality established a new programme which comprises GDE-modules. These modules are coordinated by the professor and supported by the interdisciplinary expert council (IER). Since 2020 the Statute provides for a gender professorship. The powers and tasks however are not fully aligned with the gender equality institutions. It is planned to establish a gender studies centre (a specific term in the statute). Enough resources must be allocated to the centre.

A special forum (Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen) is responsible for participating in all commissions where human resources (HR) decisions are made. This is especially true for habilitation commissions, commissions established for the selection and listing of candidates for professors or certain other higher-qualified positions. The role of the AKG members in such commissions as monitors without a vote is sometimes difficult. It is also time-consuming for the members of the AKG to take part in all commission meetings and candidate hearings. It was and is difficult to find women who are willing to be members of the AKG, in most cases highly qualified women do not want to become members.

The GEP contains detailed provisions on gender balance in leadership and decision-making and gender equality in recruitment and career progression. There are also provisions on work-life balance and organisational culture, measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment, and measures to respect intersectionality and diversity, equity and inclusion.

The University of Salzburg and other Austrian Universities usually amend their statutes quite frequently and aim to take new requirements into account. Also, GEPs are frequently amended. Problems include the somewhat unclear structure of cooperation between the various fora which carry out functions in gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Women have to be represented in all fora. In higher positions (full professors, professors) the percentage is still low and thus women have to do a lot of work with representation in the fora. This should be credited in the academic career. The design of the provisions in the GEP is good, there are however several practical impediments. As mentioned, qualified women have to take over an disproportionate number of functions in the commissions and as reviewers. This is quite time-consuming and not counted appropriately for evaluations and in general. Women conduct most of the administrative work in the commissions.

The University of Salzburg does not practice gender budgeting, which is a disadvantage. All university organs - also those responsible for budgeting - have to respect that the so-called gender mainstreaming and budgeting rules are respected. There are special resources for the implementation of the GEP, but resources for teaching gender studies, academic support, and several other issues. Reports about gender dimensions, percentages and measures to implement the plan for the advancement of women are published regularly, the data collected however are not sufficiently aggregated. The diversity, equity and inclusion approach plays a crucial role in the statute as well.

IO1 motivation, methodology and outcomes



02

IO1 - motivation, methodology and outcomes

IO1 aimed to construct a universal application model of gender equality policy in the academic space. In other words, IO1 was entirely devoted to examining and reconstructing the theoretical assumptions accompanying the creation of the Gender Equality Plans. On this basis, solutions characterized by a high degree of universality were identified, which can be applied within the framework of gender equality policy in academia as well as outside it (for example, business and local or regional authorities).

Under IO1, it was planned to:

- **create a Universal Gender Equality Plan (hereinafter: UGEP)**
- **prepare ‘tailor-made’ recommendations for partners**
- **develop a (lesser) Final Report enriched with so-called general comments⁵⁴.**

Each of the above elements is interconnected to a certain extent. ‘The main product’ is the **UGEP**, a free toolkit that will make it easier to prepare a tailor-made Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for interested institutions.

Recommendations were constructed based on the research of equality plans operating at the partners’ sites, juxtaposed with the created ‘standard’ UGEP and – self-assessment.

Finally, a key role in this Report, however, will be played by findings from expert interviews and comments on key areas, which will directly suggest to institutions interested in adopting the UGEP how (one can) understand (and then also apply) the solutions indicated therein.

2.1 From matrix to the toolkit - UGEP methodology, rationale and procedure

The starting point for the final development of the UGEP was, first of all, creating a MATRIX to examine the content of existing gender equality plans. The partners fully supported this solution during the kick-off meeting in February 2022.

The University of Silesia team, based on the analysis of several national solutions and the results of international projects (including SAGE and PLOTINA), in February 2022, prepared a **prototype matrix** along with an example of its completion based on the Gender Equality Plan at the University of Silesia in Katowice. At the beginning of March 2022, these documents were sent to partners to add comments to the matrix and make their first corrections. Discussions on correcting the matrix (primarily regarding interpreting the categories contained therein) took place mainly during two remote partner meetings (in March and April 2022). Some comments were also sent by e-mail. At the same time, **the partners were asked to analyse the existing equality plans at their universities** (or, in their absence, equality policies) and return the results of these studies (completed matrices) to the consortium leader.

⁵⁴ It is a solution modeled on the mechanisms of the international human rights protection system, aimed at explaining the accepted (theoretical) standards and showing examples of practical solutions that serve their implementation.

The matrices completed by the partners were discussed during the meeting in Cyprus (May 2022). Problems associated with the conducted research were identified (including access to detailed data and interpretation discrepancies regarding examining particular categories in practice). At the same time, it was possible to initially identify basic similarities and differences in the scope of functioning solutions. The results were also the basis for establishing with partners the concept of what we understand as ‘universal’ and the idea of the future UGEP. During the meeting in June 2022, it was agreed that it would take the form of an electronic tool oriented towards target groups. The next step was for each partner to indicate at least three national equality plans, which will be examined using the matrix by the end of September 2022. Further arrangements were also made to specify the form and content of the target UGEP.

In the second half of 2022, the main focus was on analysing each partner’s three national equality plans. At the same time, the team from the University of Silesia in Katowice analysed previously sent matrices regarding Gender Equality Plans at partner universities to identify and explain unjustified (in our opinion) repetitions/gaps. They were also presented to partners during the meeting in Salerno. Due to the above, during the direct discussion regarding IO1, it was agreed that **to clarify the context of the GEP** (and collect materials on this basis for the preparation of the UGEP and the Final Report with ‘general comments’), **it is necessary to conduct expert interviews** (at least three interviews conducted by each from partners).

Additionally, for preparing UGEP, during the meeting in Salerno (October 2022) we discussed how to **synthesise GEPs** examined by each partner. The solution here was **a simplified summary matrix**, which, based on the categories AREA, OBJECTIVE, ACTION, and TARGET GROUP, will (most likely) allow you to create an **electronic tool** that will enable you to easily construct an Equality Plan for the needs of a specific entity. The specification of arrangements regarding the form of UGEP (e-tool) was discussed in Salzburg (April 2023), where it was agreed that it was necessary (as soon as possible) to synthesise all analyses in one Excel file.

In the meantime, the Polish team worked on the visualisation of the tool and the mechanisms of its operation, which resulted in the concept of an online store. During the meeting in Miskolc (July 2023), the tool’s shape was finally defined (at this stage, the Italian team played a key role), and it was decided that areas would be the starting point for creating UGEP. At the same time, it was agreed that as many as nine categories would be offered to the tool users (the analyses carried out as part of the project allowed for such detail).

Finally, UGEP is a free toolkit that will make it easier to prepare a tailor-made Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for interested institutions. We have created it by combining, on the one hand, commonly accepted assumptions about the objectives and areas that each GEP should take into account and, on the other hand, solutions that have already proven themselves in the practice of more than **40 European universities**.

The toolkit works on the principle of an online shop, where someone can ‘throw’ precisely what they want into their basket. It is possible to mix areas, objectives and tasks. If needed – it is also possible to ‘filter’ them by indicating a specific target group. The result is a customised set of solutions, which can be used to create the institution’s first (or next) GEP.

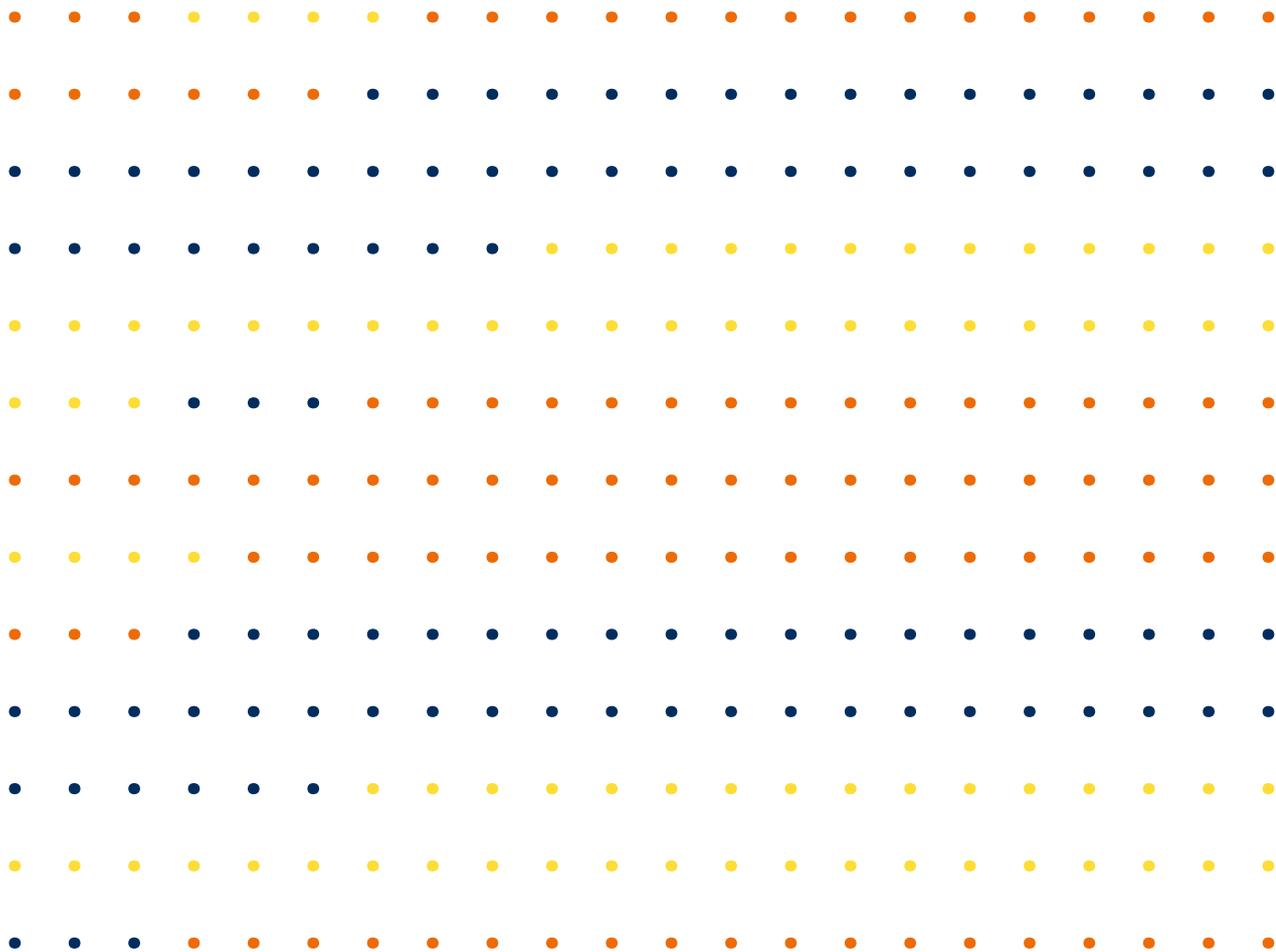
2.2. Recommendations for partners

The second product of IO1, although internal, is recommendations for partners. This solution is modelled on control procedures in international human rights law, which allows for an individual assessment of compliance with specific standards and identification of the most important problems or challenges.

Self-assessment was a key element in preparing the recommendations. As part of it, each partner was first asked to refer to the mandatory and optional elements of creating a GEP (closed questions) and to describe their own experiences. **The second step was to conduct (together with the other partners) a SWOT analysis of the conditions for creating and implementing GEP in each case. Then, based on the above, each partner prepared recommendations for itself and the other partners** (in the last case, their prioritization was suggested, which is also a solution taken from international control mechanisms).

This product is another mechanism supporting the status quo analysis recommended **in step 2 of the GEAR tool** and facilitating the preparation or revision of the GEP.

A template of recommendations for partners is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.



Findings from expert interviews (general overview)



03

Findings from expert interviews (general overview)

First of all, it is worth emphasizing that qualitative research is an additional product developed under IO1 and that it was carried out with respect for ethical standards in this respect (opinion of the Ethics Committee)

The survey, prepared and conducted in 2023, deals with the experiences of preparing, establishing and implementing the Gender Equality Plan in European universities. The survey aimed to collect possibilities that arise during the implementing of GEP based on concrete examples. Outcomes help present the set of possibilities, which are a good sample of the meaning/position of GEP in universities, even if they cannot be representative of the higher education system.

The survey was sent to people who were found to be experts on gender and diversity issues at European universities. The plan was to receive answers from 18 people. We received 18 responses, which have been analysed and are presented below. The survey contained 30 open and closed questions about constructing and implementing GEP.

The survey allows the collection of information about preparing and implementing GEP. We were asking for:

- What factors led universities to design and implement a GEP?
- Who has been responsible for preparing GEP, and how long it could take?
- What were the factors, obstacles, and challenges in designing the GEP and having endorsed it at the highest level within universities?
- Which sources and analysis have been referred to as a base of knowledge and tips (external and internal)?
- How have the people responsible for creating the GEP been prepared?
- What did the consultation process look like?
- What is the substantive scope of GEP?
- What did the establishing process look like?
- How has the GEP been implemented?

Contexts to introduce gender equality plans at universities

The most popular factor that led universities to design and implement the Gender Equality Plan is formal external requirements (e.g., Horizon Europe). We can talk about two main possible factors that led universities to design and implement GEP: internal and external. The first one is connected with internal needs and pressure from underrepresented groups. It is not too popular in our survey. We have only 7 answers that internal need led to GEP. Other answers show that the most important factor is formal external requirements. Those requirements are connected with European sources of funding. It can be predicted that this is popular and the most frequent motivation for universities and other research and educational entities.

Preparing process of the Gender Equality Plan

Most people declared that the gender equality plan currently in force in universities is the first plan of this type. In only 4 cases, we can discuss the second version of GEP. The oldest GEP was implemented in 2010. The remaining GEPs mentioned by the respondents were adopted in 2021 and 2022. So, at the moment, we are dealing with plans valid at the universities covered by the research for at least one year. On average, preparing the gender equality plan took several months. In two cases, it took more than a year.

The teams preparing the Gender Equality Plans were diverse in number and nature. These were teams and individual people performing functions related to equality at the university. This is also visible in the specializations of those who were involved in the preparation of the GEP. The teams had the most people specializing in HR and equality issues. The answers obtained in the survey show that, apart from the equality and diversity space, where gender equality plans were prepared, there were also spaces related to HR and research projects. Looking at the number of people engaged in preparing GEP, we can find solutions for 40 people. In response to the question about how many women and how many men participated in the preparation of the GEPs, we received answers that included both the proportions of women and men and numerical data. Almost all responses showed that women comprised the majority of people who prepared GEP. In two cases, there were no men at all, but it is worth mentioning that in two cases, there were as many women as men. Additionally, in response to the question of whether there were non-binary people among these people, we received a confirmatory answer in one case.

We also asked how these people were selected and received answers showing that the selection of people involved in the preparation of the GEP was quite similar. **In most of the universities from our study, the decision about who should work at GEP was concerned mainly with people dealing with equality and diversity issues. People have been chosen based on their experience (organisational and research) in equality and diversity.** Only in one case, the internal invitation was used. The responses obtained show that in several cases, the services of external parties were also used. However, the dominant solution was to engage specialists in this topic among the employees of a given institution, both among the administrative and research staff.

It was interesting to see how those teams have been prepared to work at GEP. Considering the obstacles connected with human resources, lack of knowledge, and lack of access to data, we would like to know if there were any training or other educational activities that could support those people and what kind of sources and inspirations they used.

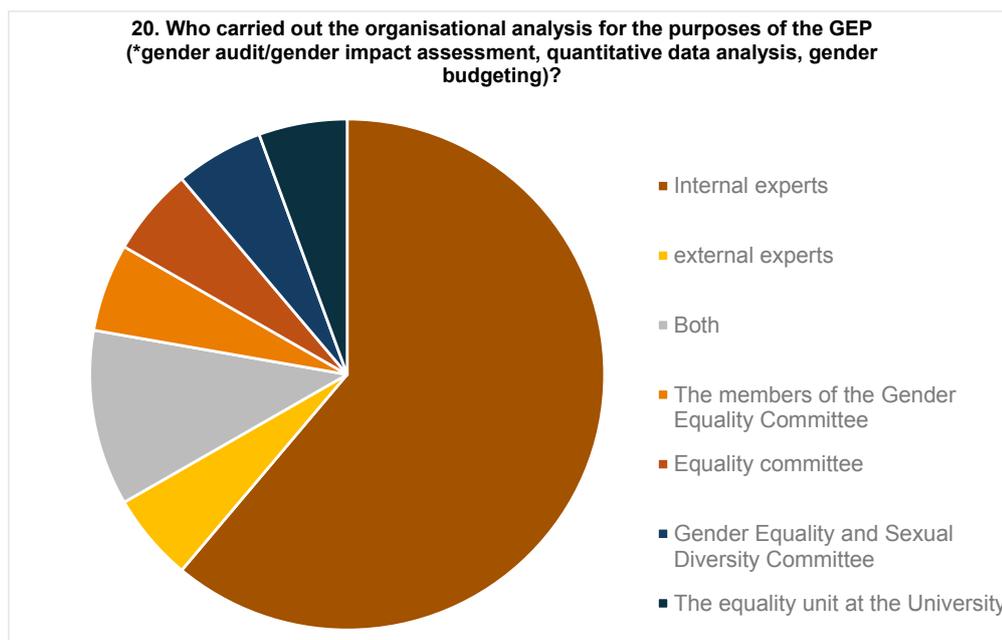
The most popular sources of inspiration are Horizon Europe Guidelines (indicated by 14 persons) **and GEAR Tool by the European Institute for Gender Equality** (indicated by 10 persons). Only one person replied that no external sources were used when creating the plan. It is worth emphasizing that GEPs from other universities inspired half of our respondents. This shows that making gender equality plans public is important not only for informing your academic community but also for sharing it with other universities.

Referring to what the preparations for working on the gender equality plan were like, our respondents indicated, in most cases, self-study, networking, and consultations (in each of these cases, more than 10 indicators). Participating in specialized training and workshops was also important (8 indications each). Considering the characteristics of the training in which the respondents participated, these courses were at national and European levels.

Factors, obstacles, and challenges in designing the Gender Equality Plan

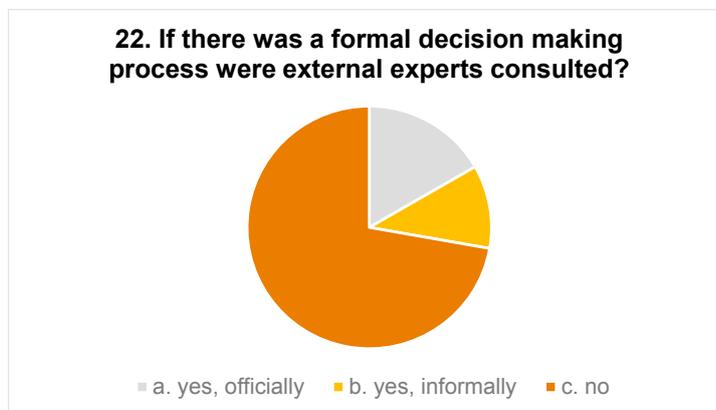
An important issue related to the preparation and subsequent implementation of a viable Gender Equality Plan is the problems and challenges faced by people involved in preparing the plan. Looking at the answer, we notice two main groups of problems, which could be treated as challenges: data and people. **The first group of problems is related to access to data collected at the university.** Respondents pointed out that gender-related indicators are missing in university statistics and that there are difficulties in collecting data on various initiatives related to equality activities. **The second group of problems concerns human resources, which refers to staff shortages (too few people can help create plans), insufficient knowledge, and low awareness of gender equality.** Several people also drew attention to the problem of financing activities related to preparing the GEP and its implementation.

Due to the fact that an essential element of preparing a gender equality plan is the diagnosis of the situation of women and men at the university, we asked who conducted the organizational analysis for the needs of GEP, including, for example, gender audit/gender impact assessment, quantitative data analysis, budgeting in terms of gender. The responses show that the diagnoses were carried out mainly by internal experts, including those from various entities involved in equality and diversity issues. Three people indicated the involvement of external experts.

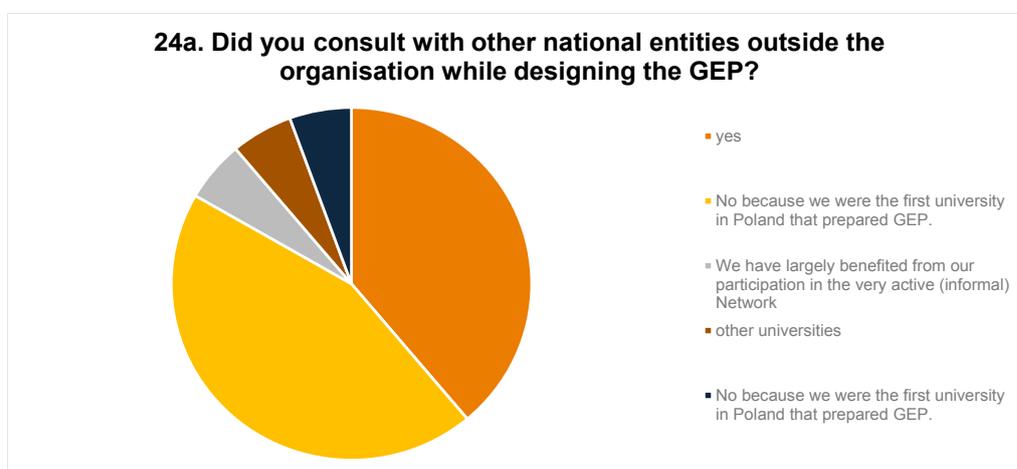


Consultation and introduction process of the Gender Equality Plan

In an attempt to recreate the process of adopting gender equality plans at universities, we asked our respondents about the consultation process for the prepared plan. **In each case, a draft version of GEP was shared with various people, internal groups, and internal entities.** When we look at the list of those people and groups, we can find **a representation of the management level (senate, Rector's council, Vice-rectors), a group of experts involved in equality and diversity (committee, observatory, HR department).** In one case, the final draft was reviewed by 3 internal experts (professors with expertise on antidiscrimination and equality) and 1 external expert (on antidiscrimination and equality). The peer review process was not used in the remaining cases. Only in three cases was the prepared gender equality plan consulted with external experts, including two informally. We were curious whether the plan was consulted and whether it influenced the final shape of the plan. We received confirmation of such an influence in six cases.



We also asked if GEP consulted with other national and international entities outside the university. In half of the cases, such consultations with other national entities occurred (especially with the national network of equality units). In only three cases, GEP was consulted with international entities (in one case, during a study visit to another university). All responses obtained show that the **consultation process was primarily internal.**

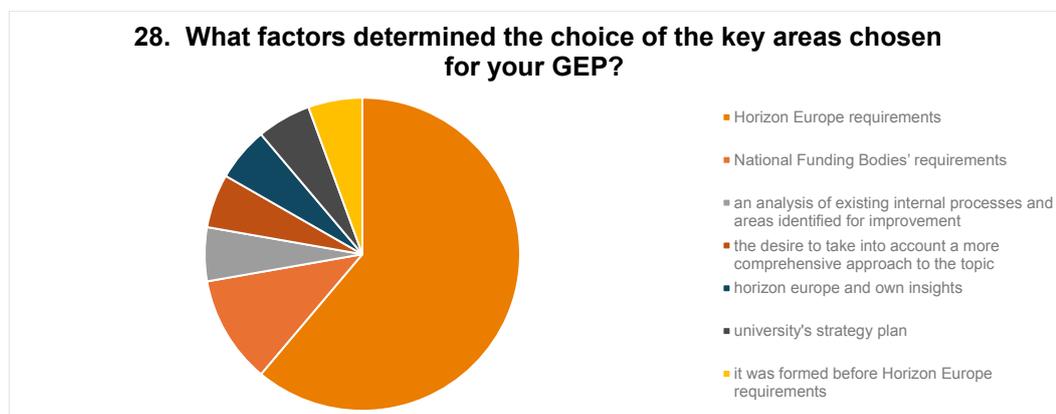


When we look at the person within which function finally approved/adopted GEP, we can find the top management of the university's structure, like the senate, board, Rector, and Executive teams. Each of the eighteen responses referred to people or teams performing managerial functions at the university. This may be suspected to be related to internal procedures for adopting strategic documents.

Substantive scope of the Gender Equality Plan

Five main areas should be explored and described in the GEP: a. Work-life balance and organisational culture, b. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making, c. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression, d. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content, e. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. We asked our respondents which key areas are covered by their GEP. Most of the answers refer to the indicated areas. Based on the answers obtained, it can be concluded that **the most important areas are: "Work-life balance and organisational culture" and "Gender equality in recruitment and career progression"**. It is worth noting that in several cases, gender equality plans also provided a space to highlight other important issues, like diversity, gendered language, and raising awareness on equality, diversity, and anti-discrimination.

It is important to explore what factors determined the choice of the key areas. In thirteen cases, the choice of areas was dictated by external requirements, primarily those related to the Horizon Europe framework program guidelines. They are crucial for institutions that want to apply for research grants based on European funding.



Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan

Preparing a Gender Equality Plan is just the beginning of change. So we were curious about how the prepared plan was implemented, by whom it was implemented, and what challenges and problems it involved. Our respondents pointed out that **there is a problem with the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content**. In a few cases, we received answers concerning the measures against gender-based violence connected with work-life balance. In three cases, the leadership and decision-making area was difficult to implement.

Our respondents also described what kind of difficulties they met. We received the list of individual problems, like below:

- recruitment/progression procedures and criteria for the permanent academic/research staff are defined by law and/or based on publications and teaching records;
- difficulties with male and female teachers because they did not give importance to this gender asymmetry;
- **finding a budget for implementation**, implementing gender balance in specific disciplines i.e., STEM;
- lack of understanding of the problem, reluctance, lack of readiness for that perspective;
- persuading leadership to take it on board and implement it.

Knowing the main problems and obstacles, it is interesting **who is responsible for implementing the Gender Equality Plan**. It is important to consider how the GEP is located at the university. We asked our respondents for it and obtained different solutions, but we can describe it in one rule. Mostly, **special entities were created, responsible for coordinating different activities connected with different areas of the GEP**. It could be Equity Committee, Gender Equality Committee, or Gender Equality Committee. So, it depends on individual tasks (different entities, different people), and the entire implementation is supervised by a special internal institution.

Looking at the future of the GEPs, we also asked for amendments and monitoring procedures. Our respondents answered that the GEP could be changed *ad hoc* or for the next implementation period. In a few cases, we have information that proposed changes should be accepted by some internal entities.

All GEPs should be monitored. The dominant answer among our respondents is that the plan is monitored periodically. It could be done by persons and institutions dealing with equality and diversity at the management level. There is no one rule connected with external monitoring. In most cases, we received answers that the GEP is not monitored externally. In two cases, we have information that the GEP is an element of the evaluation of HR Excellence.

As we mentioned at the beginning of the report, the GEPs are quite young. It is challenging to mark if everything is going as planned. We asked our respondents, and we received both answers that it is not yet possible to determine whether something has been successful or not and that the assumptions of all areas of the Gender Equality Plan are being implemented. It is too complicated to describe via one or two questions. However, it is important to realize the problems of implementing the GEP in the university. We noticed that they are similar to problems connected with preparing the GEP. There are too few people and resources, and more awareness must be made. Two of them are worth presenting:

- “lack of central support to its implementation, long delays due to bureaucracy or indifference, a general sense that gender equality is a secondary/non-important issue for the university”;
- “Above all, there is resistance to introducing suitable measures to increase the presence of women in decision-making bodies and career progression.

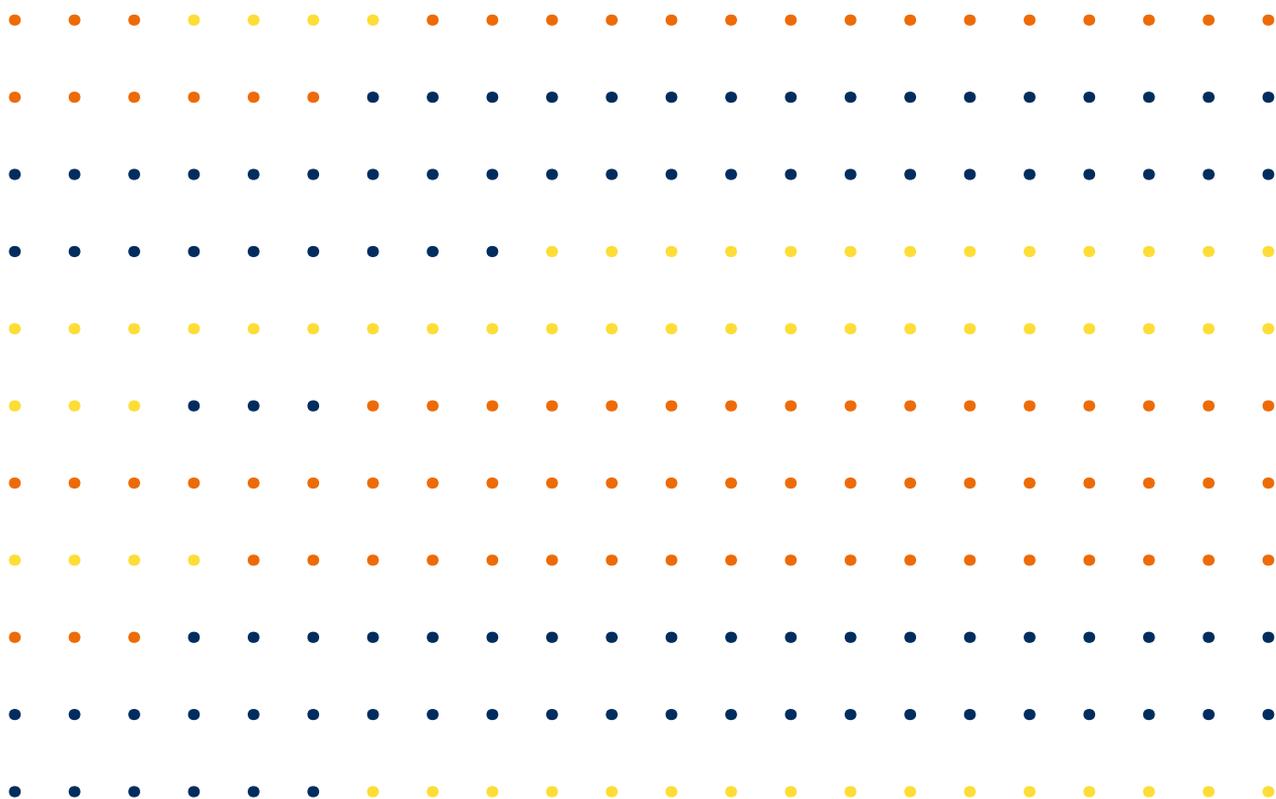
In general, considerable difficulties are encountered due to the bureaucratic structure of the university administration”.

Summary

Implementing Gender Equality Plans is closely linked to the external requirements that universities and higher education institutions face. What this process looks like **depends on many factors, and as our research shows, it is strongly related to the university’s internal resources regarding equality and diversity. The success of the GEP depends on the quality and volume of these resources.** The examples collected in the study show what implementing the Gender Equality Plan may look like and what problems and challenges universities face.

The survey aimed to gather information on how different entities designed and implemented their gender equality plan. The outcomes we obtained helped us present the set of possibilities, which is a good sample of the meaning/position of GEP in universities, even if they cannot represent the higher education system. Although the short period of validity of Gender Equality Plans does not allow for an in-depth assessment of the effectiveness and validity of their assumptions, it is worth observing the implementation process. This report aims to provide information that can become a starting point for further research on Gender Equality Plans.

A Questionnaire of interview is attached as **Appendix 2** to this report.



Key areas – justification and benefits



GEP KEY AREAS – justification and benefits⁵⁵

As was mentioned, in addition to the four mandatory requirements, the Commission, following the assumptions of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, also identifies five suggested thematic areas to be considered by R&I institutions in their GEPs. They cover the following issues:

- **work-life balance and organisational culture,**
- **gender balance in leadership and equal participation of women and men in decision-making,**
- **gender equality in recruitment and career progression,**
- **integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content,**
- **measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.**

The first area recommended for inclusion in the GEP is **work-life balance (WLB)**. It is worth noting that the EU has prioritised this issue recently. By 2 August 2022, each Member State should have implemented the 2019 EP and Council Directive (WLB Directive).⁵⁶ The identification of the area of work-life balance as the first recommended area in the gender equality plan is consistent with other EU measures. The aim of implementing the WLB Directive and promoting work-life balance is primarily to improve the employment situation of women and increase their participation in the labour market (Recitals 6 and 10). For this reason, the GEP should promote organisational change and implement the necessary policies to ensure an open and inclusive working environment. The plan should help increase women's "visibility" inside and outside the organisation and ensure that women's contribution to the organisation is appropriately recognised. The GEP can refer to work-life balance policies and practices, including parental leave policies, flexible working arrangements, and supporting employees with caring responsibilities (both academics and support staff). In the realities of higher education, the WLB measures should include also students and PhD students.

Gender balance in leadership and participation in decision-making is also not a new issue in the EU. As early as 1984, the Council encouraged the Member States to enhance the active participation of women in decision-making bodies through positive action.⁵⁷ Moreover, Council Recommendation 96/694/EC explicitly asks Member States to encourage the private sector to increase the presence of women at all levels of decision-making, in particular through the adoption

⁵⁵ This part of the report was developed largely on the basis of: Torbus U, Póltorak M., *Gender Equality Plan for R&I. Observations Based on the Initial Experiences of the University of Silesia in Katowice*, *Roczniki Administracji i Prawa* 2022; 4 (XXII): 51-69 and *Towards Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. A Methodological Guide*, E. Jarosz, J. Klimczak, M. Margiel (eds.), Edizioni AVANGUARDIA 2, 2024, https://gepard-project.eu/file/risorse/Handbook-GEPARD-DEF---ING_042024.pdf pp. 74-226.

⁵⁶ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU. PE/20/2019/REV/1, OJ L 188, 12.7.2019. See also U. Torbus, *Facilitating the work of mothers: how to diminish female vulnerability in the labour market?* [in:] *Women, children and (other) vulnerable groups: standards of protection and challenges for international law*, M. Póltorak, I. Topa (eds.), Peter Lang, Berlin 2021. and M. Póltorak, *Draft WLB Directive - a new approach to gender equality in employment?* *Studies in Labour Law and Social Policy*, Vol. 26 (2019), no. 4, pp. 317-339, doi 10.4467/25444654SPP.19.022.10912, E. Chierigato, *A work-life balance for all? Assessing the inclusiveness of EU directive 2019/1158*, *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, Vol. 36, Issue I (2020).

⁵⁷ 84/635/EEC: Council recommendation of 13 December 1984 on the promotion of positive action for women. OJ L 331, 19.12.1984.

of equality plans.⁵⁸ The call to adopt appropriate legislation, including a quota system in corporate management, has also appeared three times in the European Parliament resolutions.⁵⁹ Consequently, an attempt was made in 2012 to “break” the glass ceiling in economic decision-making processes.⁶⁰ Although the European Commission’s legislative proposal to improve the gender balance on company boards did not gain sufficient support from national parliaments (principle of subsidiarity), it returned to the political agenda and eventually resulted in the adoption of the European Parliament and Council Directive (EU) 2022/2381 in November 2022.⁶¹ The Member States have two years to transpose their provisions into national law and, by 30 June 2026, they will have to ensure that members of the underrepresented gender hold a certain percentage of directorships in listed companies. Furthermore, Recital 15 of the directive explicitly highlights the role of universities in educating companies about the competitive benefits of gender equality.

A gender equality plan should allow for an increase in the number and proportion of women in management and decision-making positions in an organisation, which is linked to all elements of the plan. Measures to ensure that women are able to occupy and remain in leadership positions may include training for gender equality decision-makers, adapting processes for selection and appointment of staff on committee, ensuring gender balance through parity or quotas, and increasing transparency in committee membership. These measures also aim to ensure a greater diversity of perspectives within the decision-making process.

A similar aim is to ensure **gender equality in recruitment and career development**. The GEP should ensure that selection procedures are critically reviewed and any biases removed, which introduces equal opportunities for career development for men and women. Establishing codes of conduct during recruitment, involving gender equality officers in recruitment and promotion committees, proactively identifying women in underrepresented fields, and introducing organisation-wide workload planning models should be considered essential in the GEP.

A fourth area suggested for universities to be included in a gender equality plan is the **integration of gender into ongoing research and teaching content**. The GEP should include a commitment to integrate sex and gender into priority research areas, identify paths to integrate gender equality into research and teaching, and support researchers in developing methods incorporating sex and gender analysis. The Commission emphasises that research funders and research performing organisations play an important role in ensuring this. Moreover, this area can also be considered a critical area for awareness-raising activities and eliminating (also unconscious) gender biases.

A final issue recommended for inclusion in a gender equality plan is to define paths to **counter gender-based violence, including sexual harassment**.⁶²

58 96/694/EC: Council Recommendation of 2 December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process, OJ L 319, 10.12.1996.

59 European Parliament resolutions of 6 July 2011, 13 March 2012 and 21 January 2021 on women and business leadership.

60 COM(2012)614 final.

61 Directive (EU) 2022/2381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies and related measures (Text with EEA relevance) PE/59/2022/INIT. OJ L 315, 7.12.2022.

62 Which is, on the one hand, the aftermath of the EU signing the Istanbul Convention in 2017 and, on the

Organisations establishing GEPs should have a clear policy against sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. This policy should codify expected employee behaviour, specify the paths to report incidents of gender-based violence, the methods of investigating such incidents, and the sanctions applicable. It is also worth considering how information and support are provided to victims or witnesses, and how the whole organisation can be mobilised to establish a culture of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment and violence.

The latter area also reinforces the European Union's existing regulations. Under Directive 2006/54/EC,⁶³ harassment and sexual harassment are contrary to the principle of equal treatment between women and men and constitute discrimination based on sex (Recital 6). Article 2 par. 2 of the directive also clarifies that any less favourable treatment based on a person's rejection of or submission to such conduct is also considered discrimination.

However, the analyses of equality plans operating in European universities conducted for constructing UGEP have proven that **an absolutely essential element of the plans created in the near future is the inclusion of intersectionality and diversity. Therefore, we decided to separate this area as well.**

4.1 Work-Life Balance and Organisational Culture

The European Union realised that the creation of social security was a priority for nations. However, it struggled with several factors in this work, including the emergence of the demographic crisis, the impact of ageing societies and the decreasing of the birth rate. All this has made the European Union interested in increasing the female workforce in employment. However, social roles have caused an additional obstacle in this process, since for women, in addition to work, household management and child-rearing tasks have become elements that need to be focused to manage the situation. In addition, a further problem was the different valuation of female and male workers in the labour market, which in many cases led to unnecessary differentiation between the parties.

On this basis, the European Union has placed great emphasis on work-life balance measures and equal opportunities in decision-making when developing its Gender Equality Plan. The first major step was to establish the principle of equal pay, which would allow wage tensions and differences between women and men to be eliminated. This was followed by various measures to regulate working conditions, focusing on atypical forms of employment, more flexible working, and handling and consideration of family life situations. A key importance in this area is that it seeks to achieve equal opportunities for men and women by valuing and taking into account the different roles in society.

Nevertheless, this area is also of particular importance in the academic sphere. In many places in academia, women and men are still treated differently. It can also be observed that in many cases certain scientific fields still operate in a

other hand, an attempt to encourage the implementation in EU Member States of the latest ILO standards in this area (ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No 190) and Recommendation (No 206). However, the report, "Harassment at Polish public universities", published in July 2019 by the HFHR, shows that this is a phenomenon affecting the higher education sectors as well.

⁶³ Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast). OJ L 204, 26.7.2006.

gender-specific manner, but the measures introduced can effectively treat this kind of separation. The other imbalance situation can be seen in decision-making mechanisms, where male dominance is still often perceptible. However, a number of good practices can already be traced to address these problems.

Benefits of work-life balance and gender equality in organizational culture

- gender-neutral treatment of employees (elimination or reduction of gender bias);
- reducing stereotypical perceptions of the social roles of men and women;
- evaluation of individual qualities and abilities regardless of gender;
- greater access for women to participate in the decision-making process;
- ensure the physical and mental health of individuals through the use of work-life balance measures and solutions;
- increasing career opportunities for parents and caregivers;
- reducing employee burnout, which can increase productivity in the long-term period.

Keywords:

- work-life balance
- equal treatment
- equal payment
- equality in decision making
- equality in academic sphere
- equal working conditions
- equal opportunities
- flexible working conditions
- family roles
- carers
- parents

4.2. Gender balance in leadership and equal participation of women and men in decision-making

Gender discrimination in academia limits the potential and opportunities of individuals based on their gender identity. Improving actions for gender equality in academia helps address this issue by actively working towards increasing the representation and visibility of underrepresented groups. Academia plays a crucial role in shaping societal values, norms, and policies. By actively working towards gender equality, academia can contribute to broader societal progress and the advancement of gender equality in other sectors. It sends a powerful message to society about the importance of equal rights, opportunities, and representation for all individuals, ultimately contributing to a more just and equitable society.

Gender equality in academia fosters a more inclusive research environment, leading to a wider range of research questions, methodologies, and perspectives. When diverse voices are included, research becomes more comprehensive, relevant, and innovative.

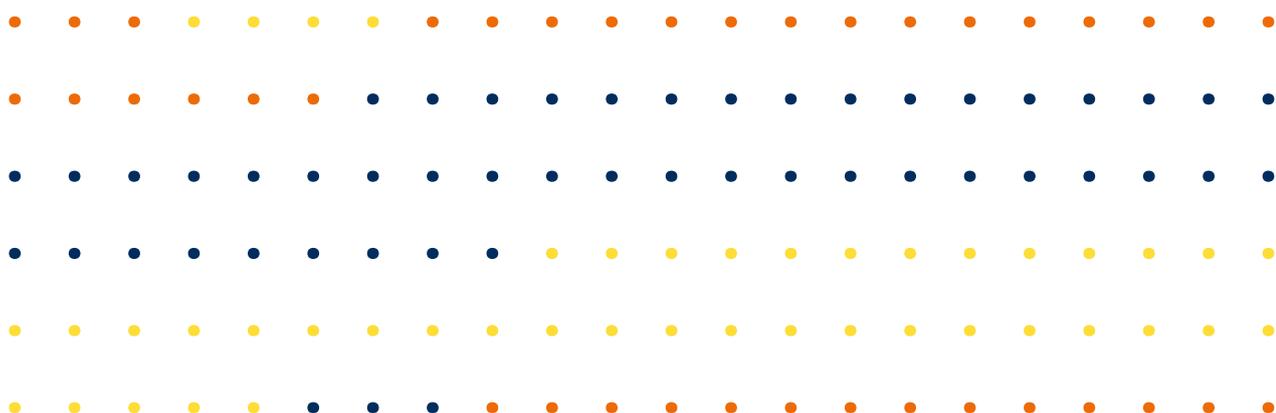
Gender inequality in academic leadership and decision-making is a pervasive issue. Women are often underrepresented in top positions, facing barriers like implicit bias and systemic obstacles. Efforts to break gender stereotypes and promote equal opportunities are crucial for achieving a more balanced and equitable landscape in academia.

Gender equality initiatives in academia promote a culture of respect, inclusivity, and support. This benefits not only individuals directly impacted by gender disparities but also creates an environment where all academic community members can thrive. By fostering a culture that values diversity and gender equality, academia can attract and retain talented individuals from all backgrounds, leading to a more vibrant and productive academic community.

In conclusion, improving actions for gender equality in academia is socially important as it reduces discrimination, promotes equal access to education, addresses underrepresentation, enhances research and innovation, cultivates a supportive academic culture, and contributes to broader societal progress. It is a necessary step towards creating a more equitable and inclusive academic community and society as a whole.

Benefits of gender balance in leadership and decision-making (esp. in academia)

- equal opportunities: gender equality ensures that everyone, regardless of their gender identity, has equal access to educational and professional opportunities
- addressing discrimination: a gender equality program helps to challenge and rectify these disparities by promoting inclusive practices and combating systemic biases that hinder the progress of underrepresented groups
- diverse perspectives: gender equality (in academia) is not just a matter of fairness; it also enriches the learning environment
- role modeling and mentorship: a gender equality program can facilitate the establishment of mentorship and sponsorship initiatives
- enhancing research quality: gender equality is vital for the advancement of knowledge and research
- social progress and equality: implementing a gender equality program (in academia) aligns with broader societal goals of gender equality and social progress





Keywords:

- underrepresentation
- gender disparity
- inclusive leadership
- decision-making bias
- equity initiatives
- glass ceiling
- women in academia
- diversity in leadership
- equal opportunities
- systemic barriers

4.3 Gender equality in recruitment and career progression (for academic posts)

Gender inequality in higher education is widely documented across many countries. Research from various countries indicates that women are frequently employed in lower academic positions, with significantly fewer in higher positions (Silander, 2023). The 'glass ceiling' metaphor is commonly used to describe the significant disparity in career advancement opportunities for men and women. Gender biases are passive obstacles hindering women from reaching top positions in organizations. Research reveals that recruitment and promotion systems lack gender neutrality and full openness to competition (Powell, 2016). Additionally, studies suggest that inadequate networks and subtle gender biases among selection committees create hurdles in the academic recruitment process for female researchers (Nielsen, 2016).

Assessing merit and making recruitment choices have wider implications beyond individual participants. These processes impact the demographic structure of the faculty and discipline more broadly, thereby influencing the image of the 'ideal academic' (Rivera, 2017). The employment disparity of women in academia can be attributed to the existence of a 'glass ceiling', which not only hinders their career advancement but also prevents the development of their potential (Farina et al., 2023). Furthermore, gender inequality may deter young women from pursuing academic careers and reinforce gender stereotypes.

Various recommendations have been put forward to address this issue. The HR Strategy for Researchers, issued by the European Commission, has a significant impact on the European Research Area. So far, 708 organisations have been awarded the HR Excellence in Research, indicating their official commitment to implementing the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Additionally, it mandates gender balance within the institution's staff structure. This encompasses an obligation to combat discrimination, ensure satisfactory working conditions, and promote healthy work-life balance. The HE institutions which have been granted the award are further tasked with providing optimum working conditions to enable both male and female researchers to gracefully navigate their familial obligations while simultaneously pursuing their career ambitions.

The implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) plays a significant role in achieving structural change in organizations. Widely recommended by the European Union since 2015, GEPs are crucial in fulfilling the obligation of member states to provide equal opportunities and treatment for all genders and combat gender discrimination.

The Gender Equality Plans presented in EU-funded projects have established three objectives. These include (1) eliminating obstacles in recruiting, retaining and advancing female researchers, (2) ensuring gender equality in decision-making processes, and (3) implementing a more gender-inclusive approach to research (Council of the European Union, 2015). Taking the above into account, more than ever inclusive human capital policies in the academic sector are needed to create a fair and supporting work environment for everyone, regardless of gender. It seems that an equity-oriented and objective recruitment and selection process is one of the most significant factors in achieving this goal.

Benefits of gender equality in recruitment and career progression (for academic posts).

The implementation of recruitment and selection in the diagnosis, monitoring, and evaluation processes of the GEP has specific advantages, in particular in relation to:

- base diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) solutions on an evidence-based approach within the field of HR, while considering the distinct needs of the certain academic community;
- identify and neutralise the unconscious biases which affect both recruitment and hiring decisions as a critical element of organisational culture,
- establish a truly open, transparent and merit-based (OTM-R) approach to the selection of candidates for the vacant academic posts;
- regular training for selection board members on OTM-R policy, unconscious bias, and hidden psychological attitudes;
- seek to balance the demographic structure of the staff of the faculty, institute, research teams, etc.;
- development of the perception of academia as an employer of the first choice, authentically in line with DEI values;
- preventing employee turnover due to organisational and psychological barriers to equal treatment.

Keywords:

- gender equality in recruitment for academic posts
- academic staff recruitment that equalizes gender opportunities
- recruitment of academic staff
- gender equality in recruitment for academic posts
- unconscious gender biases
- equal opportunities
- gender-neutral procedures
- gender-sensitive approach
- academic career development



4.4 Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

The European Commission's requirement for the development of institutional Gender Equality Plans as an eligibility requirement for participation in Horizon Europe has resulted in an increased focus on gender-sensitive research and gender-sensitive teaching. As it becomes established that knowledge cannot be separated from those producing and transferring it or from the dominant societal norms of each socio-cultural context, universities, and other research and educational institutions have a paramount role to play in mainstreaming gender and ensuring that the needs of people of all genders are considered and addressed. This becomes particularly relevant for areas where the dimension of gender has been traditionally neglected such as STEM subjects.

A gender-sensitive approach to research means that any kind of gender/sex differences – social or biological – are taken into consideration in the whole research process, including the research design, the formulation of research questions and hypotheses, the selection and development of methodologies, data collection and analysis, as well as reporting, dissemination, and exploitation of research results. On the other hand, a gender-sensitive approach to teaching means that, first and foremost, educators at all levels understand the pervasive effects that stereotypes and biases have in the transmission of knowledge and skills through curriculum design, teaching, and public outreach. Moreover, it means that educators are expected to identify their own biases, reflect on their ideas and practices and ultimately take action to minimize potential prejudices and discrimination and ultimately promote gender equality and respect for diversity. Finally, both gender-sensitive research and gender-sensitive teaching require the use of gender-sensitive language, that is, a language that is inclusive, and free from stereotypes and biases. Several research methods can be used to assess, monitor, or evaluate the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching, with the most common being surveys, semi-structured in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies, desk research/ content analysis, and action research.

Benefits of integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

- generation and transfer of knowledge that is free from gender biases;
- improvement of the scientific rigour through the integration of research dimension into all stages of the research cycle;
- ensuring the research findings' relevance to diverse populations with different needs and characteristics;
- accommodation of everyone's needs within the frameworks of curriculum design, teaching, and public outreach;
- challenging both educators' and students' biases, ideas, practices, and taking action to minimize prejudices and discrimination;
- promotion of gender equality and respect for diversity.

Keywords:

- gender-sensitive
- research
- teaching
- curriculum design
- knowledge
- bias
- university
- methodology
- research methods
- integration
- prejudice
- discrimination
- inclusive language
- representation
- STEM

4.5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

The necessity to combat sexual harassment and violence against women in academia and higher education settings is urgent and stems from various interconnected reasons. Sexual harassment and violence are frequently reported in these settings as harassment and pressure on women are often present in areas in which men have a decisive and disproportionate influence on the filling of senior posts (professorships) and the allocation of funding and research grants. The hierarchical nature of academic structures and the instability of employment are strong reasons for both harassment and violence.

In February 2024 political agreement was reached between the European Parliament and the Council on the Commission's [proposal for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence](#). The Directive criminalises physical violence, as well as psychological, economic and sexual violence against women across the EU, both offline and online. It is however a backlog that no agreement was found on the criminalisation of rape.

Various forms of violence, either alone or in combination are frequently reported. These are verbal violence, emotional abuse, physical violence, psychological violence and sexual violence.

Combating gender-based violence is also central aim in the United Nations human rights system and the Council of Europe. The [Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence](#) - the Istanbul Convention, is a core instrument in the fight against violence. On 1 October 2023, the EU became a party to the Istanbul Convention. The EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention is seen as a milestone in the EU's efforts to realise gender equality. It must be mentioned however that the EU is only bound by ambitious and comprehensive standards to prevent and combat violence against women when acting in the area of freedom, security and justice and with regard to its public administration.

The [EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#) paved the way for the Directive. The Directive provides for measures to prevent all types of violence against women, including domestic violence, and sets new standards for victims' protection. The

Directive requires Member States to ensure reporting of crimes of violence against women and domestic violence. In autumn 2023, the Commission established an EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Universities and higher education institutions serve as microcosms of society, reflecting broader societal attitudes and dynamics. By addressing sexual harassment and violence within these institutions, broader cultural change can be reached.

In conclusion, the necessity to combat sexual harassment and violence against women in academic and higher education settings is undeniable. It is a moral imperative, an academic necessity, and a catalyst for societal change.

Benefits of combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment

- eliminating sexual harassment and violence upholds the dignity of all members of the academic community;
- is necessary for the promotion of equality and inclusivity;
- leads to enhanced academic performance;
- a reputation for addressing sexual harassment and violence positively impacts an institution's ability to attract and retain highly qualified staff and talents;
- is a legal and ethical responsibility;
- is a contribution to societal change;
- is an ethical imperative: Ultimately, ending sexual harassment and violence in academia is not just a matter of policy or practicality; it is a moral imperative.

Keywords:

- equity
- gender-based violence
- sexual harassment identity
- gender
- sexism
- social division
- justice
- gender expression
- gender identity
- culture
- understanding
- belonging
- equitable
- justice
- victim protection
- hierarchical order
- dependence

4.6 Intersectionality and Diversity

Higher education institutions and other workplaces cater to clients and staff who come from diverse walks of life. This often means that designing policies for a particular group in mind will consequently have a differential impact on those who do not belong to that group. Institutions which value diversity because it is the key to creativity and innovation, try to find ways of enabling and facilitating the coming together of diverse groups, ensuring that they thrive in a particular setting, by paying particular attention to their diverse needs and incorporating their perspectives into policy and services provided. In doing so, when it comes to higher educational institutions, this will facilitate the recruitment and retention of both students and staff from diverse walks of life. Workplaces and classrooms were never homogeneous in nature, but in the past, we tended to make people adapt to a context, rather than adapting the context to fit the needs of diverse groups and individuals. By not taking on board diversity, by suppressing the perspectives and experiences of social groups and individuals, we were thwarting the majority of voices, controlling the ideas and competence of those regarded as 'wanting', and in the process, thwarting innovation. **Education and research will not thrive in an excluding environment which does not adapt to the needs and interests of its diverse groups. Bringing these groups together will create synergy, which will ensue if communication between diverse groups is facilitated and encouraged.** This synergy can only occur in settings which promote equity, in settings where these groups and interests are enabled to learn, work, and thrive. This process can only be attained through training - training to communicate across cultural differences, across age, sex, ability, social class, racial and/or ethnic divides among others. Biases - conscious and unconscious - can also be tackled via training.

An intersectional approach also needs to be taken into account. People are not just gendered, raced, aged, etc., but these identities interact and intersect in the workplace and at the study place. Policies which attempt to help people deal with their race, disability, and sexual orientation need to take into consideration the diverse permutations within these groups. So mainstreaming for diversity also needs to adopt an intersectionality approach. **Mainstreaming diversity and adopting an intersectional approach means looking after the social wellbeing of students and staff by ensuring that policies and measures are responsive to diverse needs.**

Benefits of Diversity in Academia

1. encourages creativity and innovation: diversity fosters a mix of perspectives, fueling creativity and innovative problem-solving. A diverse student body enhances the academic experience by providing exposure to varied perspectives and backgrounds;
2. enhances student success: diverse environments in education positively impact student retention and graduation rates;
3. prepares for global workforce: exposure to diverse backgrounds prepares students to collaborate in an interconnected, global workforce;
4. fosters cross-cultural understanding: interaction with diverse cultures in higher education promotes cross-cultural understanding and breaks down stereotypes;
5. increases representation of underrepresented groups: diversity ensures

- equal access, increasing the representation of underrepresented groups in higher education;
6. supports positive campus climate: inclusivity fosters a positive campus climate, reducing incidents of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.
 7. promotes social and cultural awareness: diversity raises awareness and understanding of different cultures, reducing prejudice and promoting harmony.
 8. contributes to a more just society: diversity in education contributes to creating a more just and equitable society by ensuring equal access to educational opportunities. Creating an inclusive environment values unique qualities, promoting equity for all individuals.



Keywords:

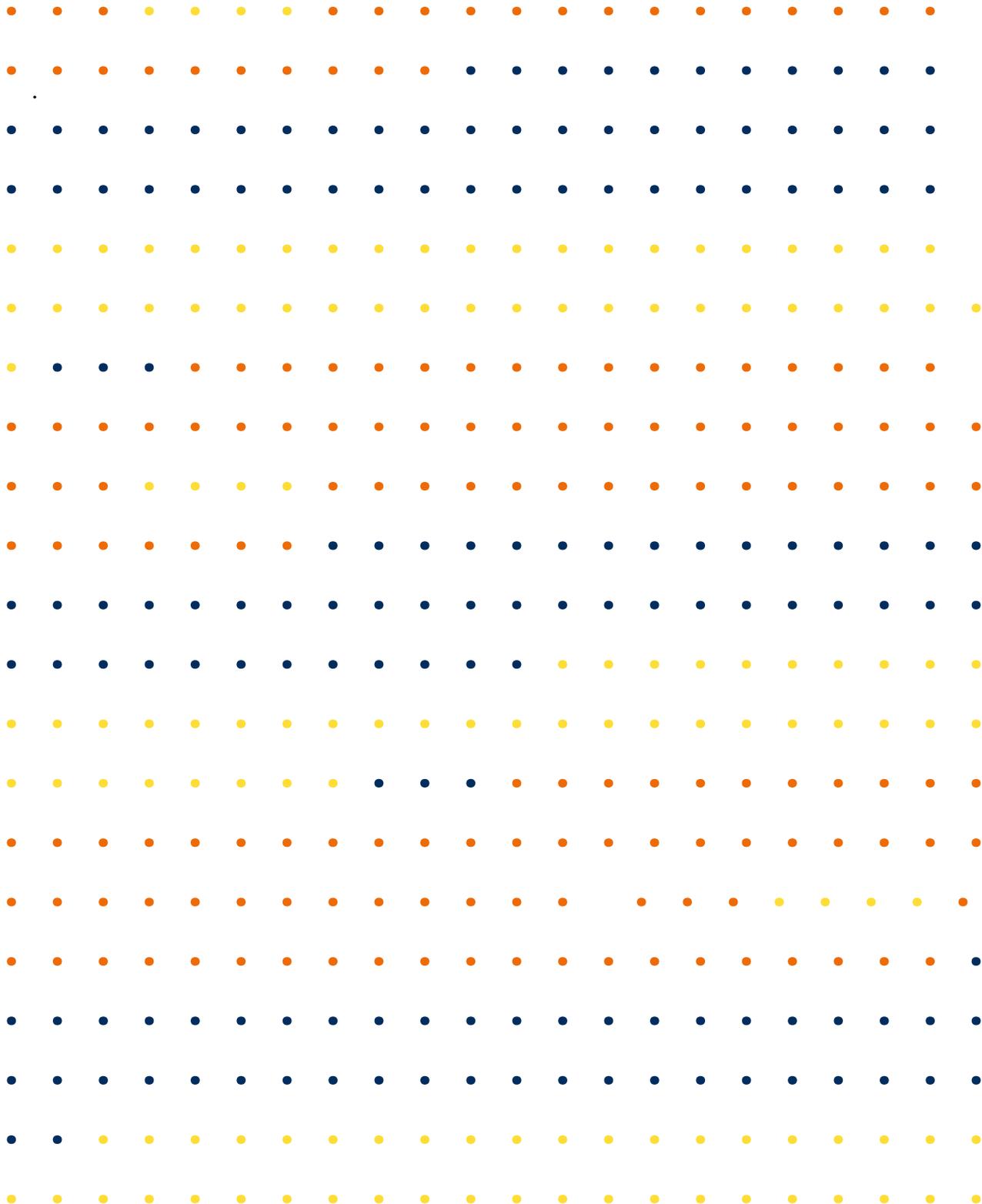
- equity
- equality
- diversity
- inclusion
- discrimination
- direct discrimination
- indirect discrimination
- bias
- implicit bias
- unconscious bias
- gender
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender pay gap
- age
- disability
- social origins
- socioeconomic status
- ethnicity
- race
- belief
- religion
- intersectionality
- mainstreaming
- inclusive language
- gender quotas
- harassment
- gender-based violence
- identity
- gender+
- racism
- sexism
- social division
- justice
- social class
- gender expression
- gender identity
- justice
- culture
- understanding
- equitable



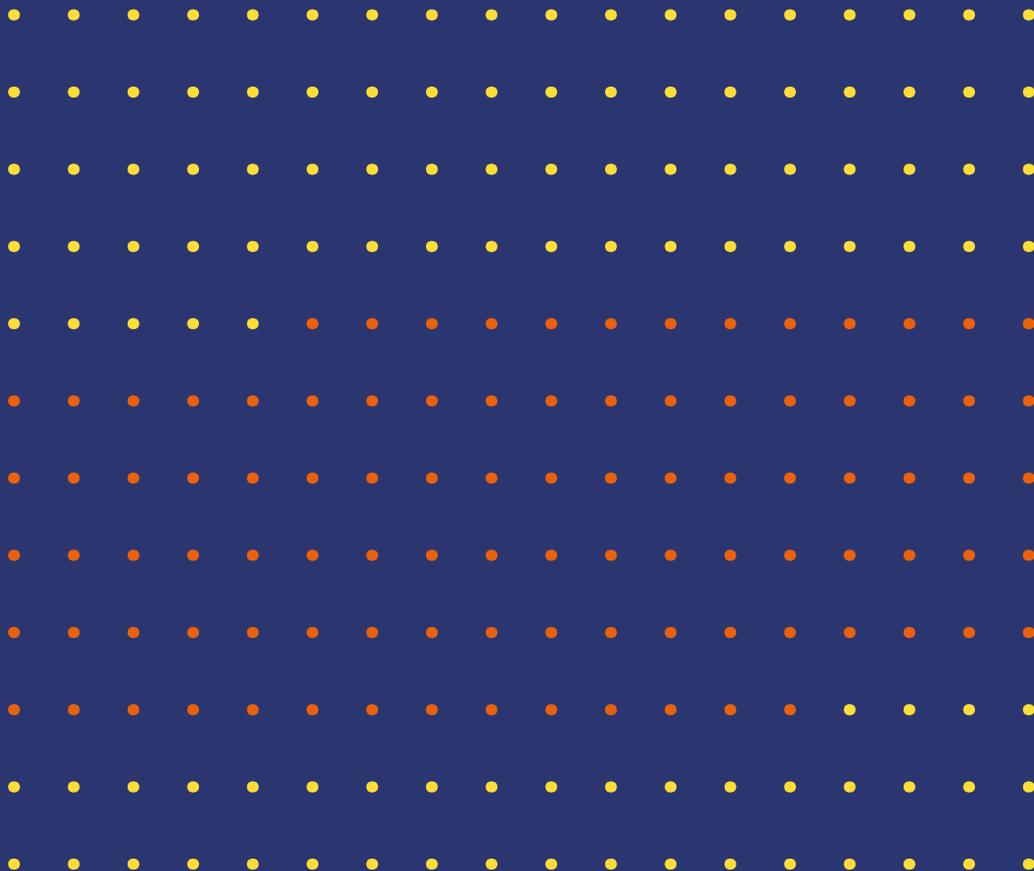
Appendix

Appendix 1: Recommendations for partners – template

Appendix 2: Questionnaire of expert interview



Appendix



Appendix 1: Recommendations for partners – template

Recommendations for GEPARD Partner [internal document]

1. SELF-ASSESSMENT

Each GEPARD team will complete the “checklist” for the own university (referring to GEPs creation and implementation), consulting as necessary with relevant stakeholders in their university.

1a. (EC) mandatory process-related GEP building blocks

- Is your GEP a public document, officially published? yes/no
- Is a university organ/forum responsible for creating and amending the GEP? yes/no
- Do you have special organ/forum responsible for the implementation of your GEP? yes/no
- Do you have special financial resources for the implementation of your GEP? yes/no
- Do you practise gender budgeting? yes/no
- Do you collect gender disaggregated data for the purpose of monitoring? yes/no
- Do you provide training for the students/academics/staff? yes/no
- Do you have dedicated business software which helps you collect the necessary data? yes/no
- Do you use the cascade method when it comes to promotion? yes/no
- Do you adopt an intersectional or diversity, equity and inclusion approach? yes/no

1b. (EC) recommended content-related (thematic) GEP building blocks

Which thematic blocks does your GEP contain?

- Work-life balance and organisational culture yes/no
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making yes/no
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression yes/no
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content yes/no
- Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment yes/no
- Intersectionality and/or diversity, equity and inclusion yes/no

1c. GEPs experiences

1. Lessons learnt from the previous experience(s) (if applicable)

1	Lessons learnt from the previous experience(s) (if applicable)	
2	Results of the baseline assessment (relevant legislation and policies in your country, existing measures promoting gender equality, key indicators, data collection, data analysis) Which issues were identified but not addressed in the GEP because other issues were more important? Is it relevant to include them in the next GEP?	
3	Results of the monitoring and evaluation (if applicable). What further need for action do they indicate? Does the evaluation cover all possible fields of action or should further data be collected?	
4	Results of the benchmark. What other organisations have done or are currently doing (in the framework of GEPs development)? What do you want to adapt to your own context?	
5	Results of the discussion with the management and the implementation team. Whether the legal framework conditions or organisational structure in your organisation have changed and whether there is a need for new action?	
6	Results from the consultation with external stakeholders (if applicable). What policy changes and relevant issues may need to be addressed?	
7	What new stakeholders would you like to engage with?	
8	How can you make your measures more sustainable?	
9	How can you make your work and progress visible throughout your organisation ?	
10	What new topics would you like to include in the next GEP?	

2. SWOT analysis (prepared individually + updated during transnational project meeting)

Strengths

Weakness

Opportunities

Threats

3. Self-recommendations

4. Specific recommendations FROM partners

Partner	Recommendation (1 – strongly encourage, 2- encourage, 3 – invite)
AUSTRIA	1. 2. 3.
CYPRUS	1. 2. 3.
HUNGARY	1. 2. 3.
ITALY	1. 2. 3.
MALTA	1. 2. 3.
POLAND	1. 2. 3.



Appendix 2: Questionnaire of expert interview

Kind Respondent

We are reaching out to the individuals involved in creating/designing a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)/EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity) plan or who are involved in implementing one at universities/research institutions.

This study is being conducted by the international project entitled Gender Equality Programme in Academia - Raising Diversity [GEPARD], which is being carried out by a consortium of partners from Poland, Malta, Italy, Cyprus, Austria and Hungary and funded by the European Union under (2021-1-PL01-KA220-HED- 000027532). The project aims to develop a system of measures that can be used by higher education or research institutions at an organisational level to help eliminate gender discrimination. A detailed description of the project is available at: <https://us.edu.pl/uczelnia/rowne-traktowanie/gepard/> [PL] and <https://us.edu.pl/en/uczelnia/rowne-traktowanie/gepard/> [EN].

We would appreciate your participation in this questionnaire. The focus of the questionnaire will be to gather information on how different entities went about designing their gender equality plan, how decision-makers were involved in its promotion as well as the lessons learnt on the nature of its design while it was being implemented.

We would also appreciate you giving us some contextual details as to how the GEP came into being in your entity. The information will be valuable and even necessary for us to present how particular GEPS were designed in contexts which differ in organisational, cultural and social settings. The results of the study will therefore help us, on the one hand, to understand the 'situatedness' of the GEP in place in your institution and, on the other hand, to develop a multidimensional map of the problems, challenges and solutions that may arise when designing/implementing GEPS, which is one of the specific aims of the GEPARD project.

The results elicited by this project will be disseminated by various means, both face-to-face and through public presentations on a dedicated website. We believe that both the results of the research and the findings of the GEPARD project will be helpful to academic and non-academic communities and organisations interested in promoting equality and diversity policies that foster the development of individuals and universities as a whole. Therefore, we warmly invite you to participate in the questionnaire since the information you provide will help us achieve this goal.

The open-ended questionnaire is formulated in such a way that it will not collect any sensitive data or personal details of those engaged in developing/implementing gender equality plans. If you request, the name of those who participate in this questionnaire and their institutional affiliation will be anonymised.

For any additional information, do not hesitate to contact Dr Magdalena Póltorak, from the University of Silesia in Katowice [magdalena.poltorak@us.edu.pl], who is the leader of the GEPARD project consortium.



CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the information sheet. I understand that taking part is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that all responses received in the study will be kept confidential. My identity/ institution will not be revealed unless I give my explicit permission. I understand that data will be held in accordance with regulations and will be stored for a minimum of 3 years.

I agree to take part in the study _____
(signature)

I would like to keep my identity/ institution confidential YES/NO



This survey concerns the GEP/EDI plan currently in force at your institution.

1. What factors led your institution to design and implement a GEP?
(Please choose from the following options. You can choose more than one option).

- a. internal need
- b. decision taken by the national authorities/legal obligation
- c. pressure from underrepresented groups/activists/lobbying groups
- d. formal external requirements (e.g. Horizon Europe)
- e. pressure from groups/entities within the higher educational/research institution
- f. other (Please indicate) _____

2. How long did the development of GEP last? (Please choose from the options)

- a. a few weeks
- b. several months
- c. about half a year
- d. almost a year
- e. more than a year

3. When was the GEP finally approved /adopted? _____

4. By whom? _____

5. Was this the first GEP even enacted by your university /research institute?

- a. Yes
- b. No (please indicate when the first GEP was adopted) _____

6. What were the factors/obstacles you had to deal with when it came to designing the GEP you worked upon and having it endorsed at the highest level within your institution? What were the biggest challenges?



7. Who created/developed the most recent GEP in your institution? _____

8. How many people were involved in the creation/development of the GEP in your institution? (Please choose from the options below)

- a. 2
- b. 3
- c. 5
- d. 10
- e. Other _____

9. What were their professional specialisations? (Select all the factors that apply)

- a. human resources expert b. gender equality expert
- c. legal expert
- d. academic registrar expert e. diversity expert
- f. Other _____

10. What was their gender?

- a. female (indicate number) ____
- b. male (indicate number) ____
- c. non-binary (indicate number) _____

11. How were the aforementioned people recruited/selected?

12. Was that decision prescribed by the legal basis or the statute of the University?

- a. yes
- b. no

13. When it came to individuals who developed the GEP were these (choose all the relevant options)



- a. appointed specifically by the institution
- b. voluntary participation
- c. on a specifically paid contract
- d. external experts
- e. Other (please stipulate) _____

14. Did you refer to particular sources when you were developing the GEP?

- a. yes
- b. no (skip question 15)

15. Which sources did you refer to? (You can choose more than one option)

- a. Horizon Europe Guidelines
- b. GEAR Tool by European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- c. EU Projects focusing on Gender Equality (e.g. GE Academy, Gender-Net, TARGET)
- d. Athena Swan
- e. International Initiatives (e.g. Guidelines by UNICEF)
- f. other GEPs (Please stipulate) _____
- g. other _____

16. How did the people responsible for the creation of the GEP prepare for their work (You can tick as many as necessary)

- a. participated in specialised training
- b. self-study
- c. workshops
- d. networking
- e. consultation
- f. other (Please stipulate) _____

17. If the people involved in the GEP design took part in any training (you can refer to multiple training sessions)

- a. which training did they undertake _____ which were the entities which provided the training



i. nationally _____

ii. EU _____

iii. Non-EU _____

b. which training did they undertake _____ which were the entities which provided the training

i. nationally _____

ii. EU _____

iii. Non-EU _____

c. which training did they undertake _____ which were the entities which provided the training

i. nationally _____

ii. EU _____

iii. Non-EU _____

18. Who carried out the organisational analysis for the purposes of the GEP (*gender audit/gender impact assessment, quantitative data analysis, gender budgeting)?

a. internal experts

b. external experts

c. both

d. other (Please stipulate) _____

19. When the draft of the GEP was drawn, with whom was it shared within the organisation for feedback? (please state the designation of the individuals, groups or committees consulted)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

20. If there was a formal decision making process were external experts consulted?

a. yes, officially



- b. yes, informally
- c. no

21. Did this consultation lead to changes? If yes, please stipulate what type of changes were enacted? _____

22. Did you consult with other entities outside the organisation while designing the GEP?

- a. National entities (please stipulate) _____
- b. International entities (please stipulate) _____

23. Did this lead to changes? If yes, please stipulate. _____

24. Which key areas does your GEP cover? (Please choose all that apply)

- a. Work-life balance and organisational culture
- b. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- c. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- d. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
- e. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment
- f. Other (please stipulate) _____

25. What factors determined the choice of the key areas chosen for your GEP?

- a. Horizon Europe requirements
- b. National Funding Bodies' requirements
- c. other (please stipulate) _____

26. Which key areas did you find it difficult to include in your organisation's GEP?

27. Which were the difficulties you encountered? _____



28. What procedures were used for officially establishing the GEP as a university/research institute document?

29. If the GEP in your organisation has existed for a long time, what is the amendment procedure?

30. Who is responsible for the implementation of the GEP? _____

31. How is the implementation of the GEP monitored internally? _____

32. How is the implementation of the GEP monitored externally? _____

33. From the GEP, which actions have already been implemented?

34. What difficulties are encountered in implementing the plan in the entity in question? _____

35. Is any modification of the GEP being anticipated, and why, and under what conditions?

General Information: study participating entity

36. The organisation you work for is:

- a. University
- b. technical college
- c. medical college
- d. art college
- e. research institution
- f. research funder
- g. Other? (Please stipulate) _____



37. Institution status:

- a. public
- b. private

38. How would you describe your position (select all that apply)

- a. a member of a gender equality team/office/committee
- b. gender/equality officer
- c. administrative management
- d. academic management
- e. research and/or academic staff
- f. administrative/non-academic staff
- g. HR department
- h. student/PhD student
- i. other (please stipulate) _____

39. Role in the team preparing the GEP (select all that apply)

- a. team leader
- b. initiator
- c. area leader
- d. team member
- e. other (Please stipulate) _____

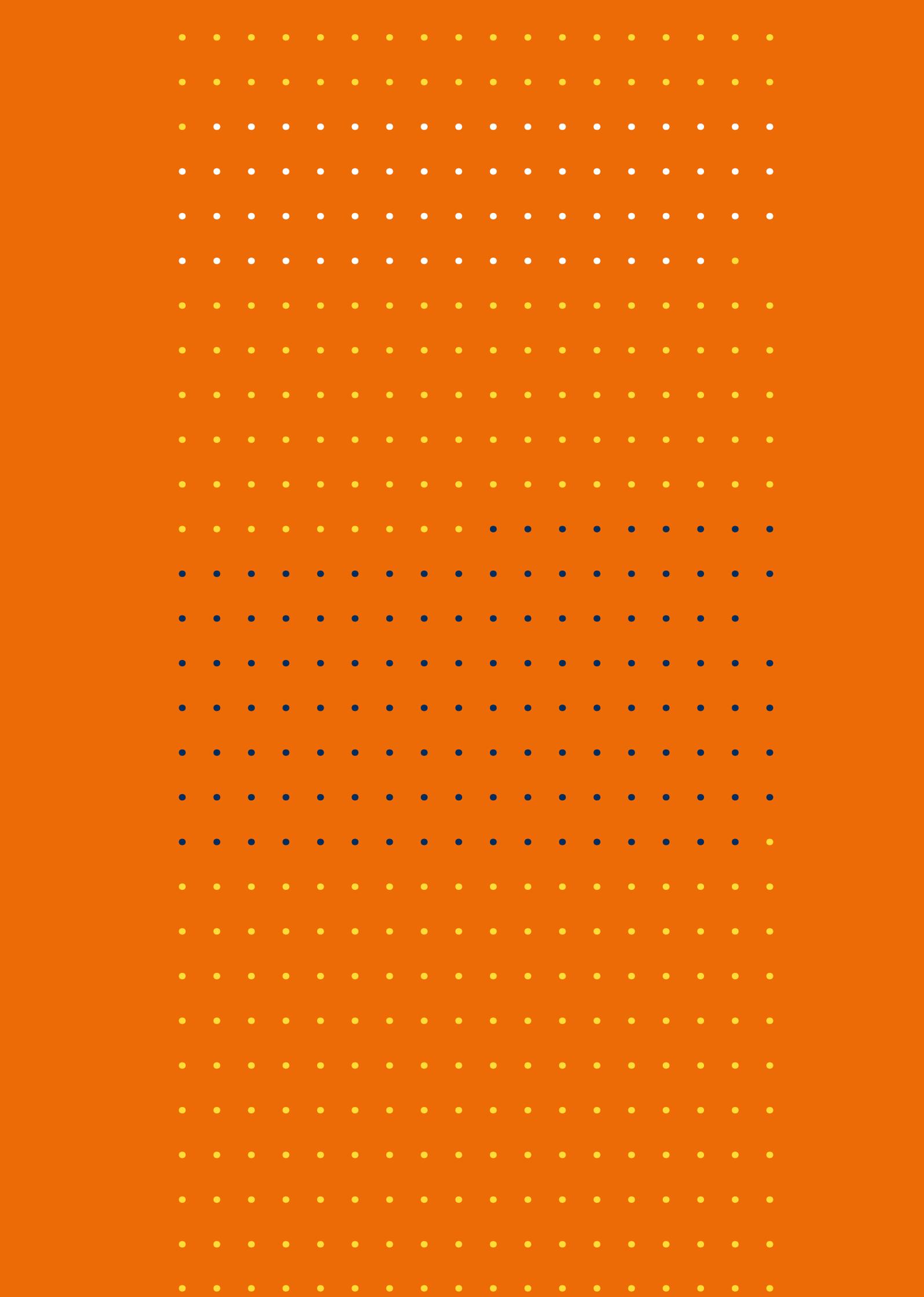
40. In the case we want to quote some of the issues you raise, do you want to be referred by name in the report?

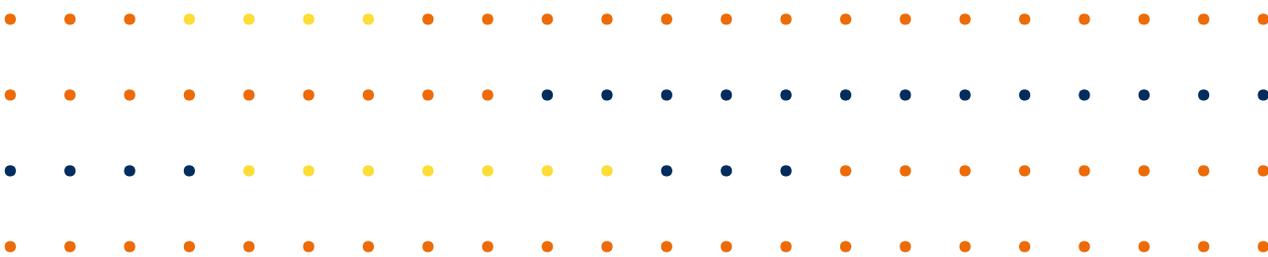
- a. Yes
- b. No

41. Do you want the entity you are speaking about here referred to by name? If yes, please include the name of the entity in question.

- a. Yes _____
- b. No

Thank you for participating in the survey!





This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. The contents of this report are available under the Creative Commons AttributionShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0).

