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<b>Deliverable leader:</b>	SV
<b>Lead Authors:</b>	Maria Sangiuliano, Giulia Nason (SV)
<b>Contributors:</b>	Marina Cacace (K&I); all partners
<b>Reviewer</b>	Florian Holzinger (JR)
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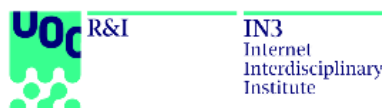
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<b>DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1. Background .....	7
1.2. Scope of the study and methodology.....	8
<b>2. BOLOGNA PROCESS AND EHEA .....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1. Gender as a component of the social dimension of EHEA .....	11
2.2. Recent developments in HEI policies in Europe: integration with Research and Innovation? 24	
<b>3. ERA – THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA.....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1. Methodological note.....	28
3.2. Institutional framework .....	28
3.3. PRIORITY 1: More effective national research systems .....	29
3.4. PRIORITY 2: Optimal transnational cooperation and competition.....	31
3.5. PRIORITY 3: An open labour market for researchers.....	32
3.6. PRIORITY 4: Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research.....	33
3.7. PRIORITY 5: Optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge.....	38
3.8. PRIORITY 6: International cooperation .....	40
<b>4. FROM HORIZON 2020 TO HORIZON EUROPE .....</b>	<b>42</b>
4.1. Horizon 2020 .....	42
4.2. Horizon Europe: positioning CASPER in a dynamic and still uncertain scenario.....	44



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<b>5.</b>	<b>FROM THE “STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT” TO “A UNION OF EQUALITY”</b> .....	<b>49</b>
5.1.	The Strategic Engagement 2016-2019 .....	49
5.2.	A Union of Equality. Gender Equality strategy 2020-2025.....	50
<b>6.</b>	<b>PRELIMINARY MAPPING OF CERTIFICATION AND AWARDING SCHEMES</b> .....	<b>53</b>
6.1.	Methodology .....	54
6.2.	Preliminary overview .....	54
6.3.	Factsheets .....	56
6.4.	The HRS4R and the Charter and Code .....	56
<b>7.</b>	<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS</b> .....	<b>85</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>88</b>



## List of Figures

**Figure 1** Scorecard – Bologna implementation report 2018 p.11

**Figure 2** Number of education systems monitoring the composition of the student body, by stage and by students' characteristics, 2016/17 - Bologna implementation Report 2018 p.12

**Figure 3** Preliminary structure of Horizon Europe p.43

## List of Tables

**Table 1** Analysis of ESG standards for Internal Quality Assurance p.18

**Table 2** Analysis of ESG standards for External Quality Assurance p.19-20

**Table 3** Analysis of ESG standards for External Quality Assurance Agencies p.21

## List of acronyms / abbreviations used in this document

<b>BFUG</b>	Bologna Follow-Up Group
<b>CAS</b>	Certification or Award Scheme
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EESC</b>	European Economic and Social Committee
<b>EHEA</b>	European Higher Education Area
<b>ENQA</b>	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>EQAR</b>	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
<b>EQF</b>	European Qualification Framework
<b>ERA</b>	European Research Area
<b>ESG</b>	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GE</b>	Gender Equality
<b>H2020</b>	Horizon 2020
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HEIs</b>	Higher Education Institutions
<b>HRS4R</b>	Human Resources Strategy for Researchers
<b>IGAR</b>	Integration of Gender Analysis in Research
<b>MS</b>	Member States
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>R&amp;I</b>	Research & Innovation
<b>RFOs</b>	Research Funding Organisations
<b>RPOs</b>	Research Performing Organisations
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SFIC</b>	Strategic Forum for International Cooperation with Third Countries
<b>SWG</b>	Standing Working Group



## Executive Summary

The main objective of this report is to provide an overview of the current European policy frameworks regarding quality and excellence in Research and Higher Education and if/how they embed gender equality considerations. This overview is oriented towards the identification of the main windows of opportunities for the creation of a European level certification on gender equality in Higher Education and Research. The report mostly focuses on the main policy frameworks of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area; it also provides an overview of the role which gender equality has had in the Horizon 2020 programme, and of the role which it will probably take in the Horizon Europe programme. Some insights on the role of research and innovation in the new European gender equality strategy will also inform the overview.

The second objective of this report is to provide a preliminary mapping of the most representative certification and award systems which relate to gender equality and diversity, which will also inform the identification of best practices for the potential European level certification.



## 1. Introduction

The D3.1 Policy framework report is the first public deliverable of the CASPER project, which has the goal of studying the feasibility of a European certification system on gender equality targeting Universities and research organizations.

This report is one of the two public deliverables of WP3, “Assessing policy frameworks and mapping the landscape of certifications and awards in Higher Education and Research”.

The main objective of this report is to map the main EU policy frameworks regarding quality and excellence in research and education to assess if and to what extent gender equality is taken into account, and which further discursive windows of opportunities could be identified for the building of a Certification system related to gender equality.

The second objective of the report is providing a preliminary overview of the most representative awarding and certification schemes identified by the Consortium. It will be followed by D3.3 “State of the Art analysis: mapping the awarding certification landscape in Higher Education and Research”, the second public deliverable for WP3, which will be published in June 2020. The “State of the Art analysis” will provide a more in-depth and complete overview of the Certifications and Awards schemes landscape. As this D3.1 is being written, a network of national researchers has been activated in Task T3.2 to provide a systematic mapping of Certifications and Awards in Europe and beyond (EU28 Member States + Australia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, US) to inform the D3.3 report.

### 1.1. Background

Around 20 years ago, the European Commission started to take action to become a catalyst for change in gender equality in research and innovation across Europe. Since then, several award and certification systems have been created in the European research context, yet they **predominantly operate at national level**, with some of them exporting their model to other national contexts, as is the case of Athena SWAN. Evidence suggests that certification and awarding systems “are an effective means of driving, and together with gender equality measures, creating structural change in the context of research institutions” (Equality Challenge Unit 2015). Nonetheless, such evidence is grounded in national experiences, as there are currently no European-level certification or award schemes which focus specifically on gender equality in the research and Higher Education context.

In 2019, the European Commission’s published a call for a study on potential scenarios for a European award or certification (SwafS–11-2019), thus showing an interest in exploring the potential for a European-level scheme focused on gender equality. CASPER is a feasibility study for different scenarios (three scenarios + a “no-action” one), which will be developed through participative co-creation processes involving European stakeholders from different backgrounds – i.e. policy making, Higher Education and research, certification and award provision. The feasibility study is intended to map and subsequently assess existing certification and awarding systems to distil the key requirements for a successful certification or awarding scheme which can be applied to the diverse research and Higher Education context in Europe. The final objective of CASPER is to provide the Commission with a recommendation on how to proceed, not before having carefully mapped the current policy landscape at European (as is scope for this deliverable) and national level (as is scope for Deliverable 3.3) and grounded the scenario development in an insightful understanding of the two.

In the existing context of a sparse and diverse certification offer, a European-level certification on gender equality in research and Higher Education may be of particular importance to **enhance existing efforts to mainstream gender by providing a common frame** of reference that European research institutions (e.g. RPOs/RFOs) can use. Necessarily, such a frame of reference would be grounded in European policies but sensitive to the diversity of national contexts. Indeed, European States have diverse legal and political frameworks, available resources, and rates of progress in terms of gender equality – and specifically, achievement of the ERA gender equality objectives (Wroblewski 2018),



which as this report will show is among the main policy frameworks for gender equality in research at the European level.

Moreover, as the analysis in this report suggests, the existing certifications and awards which focus on gender equality generally have diverse understandings of the concept itself. Capitalising on definitions, as well as indicators, of existing schemes, a European certification or award can contribute to the development of a clearer definition of gender equality at EU level.

CASPER has the ambition to support envisioning a new European-level certification or award which could be grounded in the experience and critical study of existing systems and be designed to take into account the latest policy developments at the EU level, so as to have the potential to integrate innovative aspects which go beyond the existing offer. A window of opportunity, and a strong driver for the establishment of a potential European scheme that certifies Gender Equality in RPOs and RFOs, is the current direction which the Commission has taken regarding the Horizon Europe programme: as will further be explored in this report, the Commission is considering to require Horizon Europe applicants to have adopted a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)(see also p.47 of this report). A European certification may be useful to promote and support the creation of quality GEPs throughout Europe's research, education, and innovation area.

Structures, mechanisms and procedures could be devised to help overcoming the currently known limitations to the use of certification and award systems to support institutional change in research and Higher Education. Existing studies on certification systems seem to point at the challenge to balance between having a certification system that triggers improvement of the quality of gender equality work on one hand, and the need to avoid over-bureaucratization of processes on the other. In particular, establishing an EU-level scheme could provide the opportunity to focus on how to prevent and counter potential use as box-ticking or lip-service exercises, as well as the well-known risk that the application process to awards and schemes implies further burden and increased workload for often already marginalised actors in the institutions such as Gender Equality officers and/or advocates (Tzanakou, 2019; Tzanakou and Pearce, 2019; Ovseiko et al. 2017). A careful study of the current offer as well as of the potential innovations which a European scheme could offer is at the centre of the CASPER project and will in part be discussed in the following chapters.

## 1.2. Scope of the study and methodology

This study is comprising **two main sections**: chapters 1-5 describe and analyse main EU level policies frameworks related to the CASPER remit, while chapter 6 describes the main Certification and Awarding Schemes which have been identified as interesting and mapped within the consortium prior to the systematic mapping to be carried out by the network of national researchers in Task 3.3.

As far as the content of chapters 1-5 is concerned, and as CASPER has the goal of studying the feasibility of a European certification scheme targeting Universities and Research Organizations, we consider it useful to **ground the project in current EU level policies and efforts to promote gender equality and human resources**, to explore predominant discourses, policy trends, identify potential windows of opportunities, identify stakeholders but also potential resistances.

For the CASPER feasibility study, research performing organizations are the main stakeholders. In their mission, research and teaching activities are typically intertwined, although with different shades of specializations. Therefore, both EU policies related to higher education and to research are highly relevant for their institutional strategies, processes, and operations. While EU research policies fall into the **European Research Area (ERA)** implemented at the EU level through **Horizon Europe (H2020)**,





higher education is covered by the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)** and implemented through the Bologna Process. This cleavage started to be addressed only recently, as we will see further below. The **EU Gender Equality Strategies** have also been included as part of this first deliverable, to highlight the main changes and policy trends that could be relevant for CASPER.

To study each policy framework, we have proceeded with **desk-based research** and looked at both official Communications from the European Commission and Monitoring Reports where relevant. Further and more fine-grained search within documents such as minutes of meetings, policy briefs and other documents has complemented the work. We have deliberately restricted the analysis to the last 5 years, especially for the Bologna Process and EHEA. We have also sketched a policy history from secondary bibliographic sources.

When analysing policy documents and reports, **we look at meanings attributed to quality/excellence** where relevant, because a certification system will necessarily have to be positioned by a definition or understanding (or multiple definitions/understandings) of what quality is, and because discourses on quality and excellence have become prominent on the EU research and education agenda. At the same time, the excellence rhetoric and its operational mechanisms have been looked upon with critical eyes for being ‘fetichised’ concepts (Moore et al, 2017) and within gender studies as well, for being inherently gender biased (EC 2004; Benschop, van der Brink 2012).

Moreover, as gender equality is increasingly regarded as a way for enhancing quality of research (EC, 2012) and quality of higher education institutions ([Unesco, 2019](#)), it is interesting for CASPER to assess within what policy areas/mechanisms this discourse is more widespread.

We are also, more specifically, interested in whether/to what extent and how **gender and intersectionality** are taken into account within each policy framework and discourse. In this respect, our reading of the different policy documents was inspired by a feminist discourse analysis approach: we look into how problems related to (gender and intersecting) inequalities are defined, what policy solutions are proposed, and what actors/stakeholders are envisaged to be in charge and/or involved (Bacchi & Eveline, 2010).

With the goal of this report being functional to the next steps of the CASPER feasibility study, **in each paragraph we draw some preliminary reflections on how each of the policies considered has relevance for CASPER and the scenarios for a European certification system on Gender Equality it will devise**. Relevance of the different policy frameworks for CASPER refers to potential implications along the next steps of the project (assessing the impact of existing Certification schemes and exploring the needs from stakeholders; co-creating and piloting scenarios with stakeholders).

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*In each paragraph we draw some preliminary reflections on how each of the policies considered has relevance for CASPER and the scenarios for a European certification system on Gender Equality it will devise.*

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We have also tried to envisage what areas the different policy frameworks suggest that should be assessed and addressed; what indicators to use; what incentives to provide for participating RPOs; what type of quality assurance mechanisms to be put in place for the scheme itself. We have reflected strategically on how CASPER could be

better positioned to maximize the transformative potential of the evaluative devices it would put in place and minimize ‘reductionist’ or opportunistic uses of a topic (gender equality) which is becoming ‘fashionable’ on the one hand but also subject to strong resistances on the other.

To this respect, awareness and knowledge of feminist debates on the current changes in academic and research governance has been underlying our research work for this report. As new forms of managerialism driven by economic forces coexist with efforts to challenge existing power structures within research organizations to make them more gender equal and inclusive, our approach has

prioritized the pragmatic aims of envisaging a strategic framing for CASPER within existing discursive windows of opportunities, still trying to bear in mind the risks of ‘cooptation’ and instrumental approaches to gender equality policies (Marx Ferree & Zippel, 2015; Kunz, 2016).

We conclude the report with the **factsheets of 14 certifications and awarding schemes** which the consortium has preliminarily mapped. The factsheets are informed by the compilation of the analytical templates that have been designed to guide the work of national researchers as part of D3.2 and within T3.3. The same Certification and Awarding schemes that are described here are already the object of a more in-depth study within T.3.3, apart from HRS4R: the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers which has been given a prominent role compared to other schemes, and will not be further studied in T3.3, as this is the only EU level Awarding scheme that is directly promoted and supported by the European Commission with Euraxess. Considering its relevance, we have complemented the information retrieved via desk-based research with two phone interviews with our Advisory Board member Izaskun Lacunza from FECYT- Euraxess network and our CASPER partner Marcela Linkova (ISAS, GENDERACTION and Chair of the ERAC SWG on Gender in R&I).

## 2. Bologna Process and EHEA

A coordinated effort on higher education systems among EU countries stemmed from the rising international mobility of students and augmented globalization and competition, boosting the need to make European higher education institutions attractive worldwide. The process dates back to the Sorbonne declaration, signed by the Ministers in charge of higher education of France, Italy, United Kingdom and Germany, in 1998, and later, in 1999, to the signature of the Bologna declaration. These initial steps were followed by Ministerial Conferences at Prague 2001, Berlin 2003, and Bergen 2005. Mobility is at the core of the Bologna process and its vision of creating a European Higher Education Area; the aim is to boost the role of the EU in the global knowledge society by facilitating internal mobility of students, teachers, and administrative staff. The tools for achieving such overarching goals are threefold:

- comparability of a three cycles’ degree structure and increased transparency, as part of the broader EQF - European Qualification Framework (three-year bachelor degree, two-year master, and PhD), and mutual recognition of degrees, course units and other awards. The system of academic credits was at the core of this, together with Diploma Supplement describing the degree and qualifications obtained;
- assessment and accreditation of institutions and academic programs based on shared quality standards and procedures;
- development of mobility programs by student, teaching, research and administrative staff, including portability of national loans and grants.

As Member States hold full responsibility on educational matters, **an EU level policy could only take place as a soft policy**, based on Open Method for Coordination, follow up and monitoring mechanisms (Bologna implementation reports, country specific case studies), reconciling standardization and diversity.

Councils of Ministers responsible for higher education shape policy directions and issue Communiqués, whose implementation is monitored by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) of which the EC is also a member, and is supported by a Secretariat set up in 2003. In fact, the year 2015 marked the starting of a new phase of the Bologna Process (2015-2018). After the Ministerial Meeting in Yerevan, Armenia in May 2015, the first appointment of the BFUG took place where an agreement on the Work Programme was reached.

The implementation supporting structure consists of Thematic Peer Groups and Working Groups attached to the 2018-2020 Work Plan. Relevant to the scope of this report are Advisory Group 1



dedicated to the Social Dimension, Thematic Peer Group C to Quality Assurance. Consultative members are European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe and the Council of Europe would be consultative members.

**Today the Bologna Process is ratified by 48 nations<sup>1</sup> and, in many ways, the initial ambition –to create EHEA through educational comparability, mobility, flexibility, employability and qualification frameworks– has been implemented.** According to the implementation reports, compliance has been achieved and is well established even within different levels and paces of implementation (European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice, 2018).

Scholars who have studied the governmentality implied in the process address **the absence of a legal entity as centre of authority**: it has been observed that this is in tune with the new educational standards featured by generic performance standard detached by specific contents and all interlocked (Brøgger, 2019). It is worth recalling how, since the early years of the Bologna process, many scholars have **raised critical views from within the academic sector**. Their critiques regarded quality standards specifically, which were seen as a way to undermine the autonomy of higher education and to impose neoliberal or market-driven values and criteria; all of this while overlooking the core goals of academic institutions, knowledge creation and transmission (Veiga, 2019).

## 2.1. Gender as a component of the social dimension of EHEA

Already in the London Communiqué back in 2007, a reference was made to the **social dimension as central in the Bologna Process implementation**. This is also reflected by the BFUG structure setting in place a dedicated Advisory Group on the topic. The Social dimension has been defined as a “moving target” (Storan 2019), as the various Ministerial Communiqués have given more or less importance to it through the years.

**The value of inclusiveness is placed high in the EHEA vision**, as reiterated in the Yerevan Communiqué in 2015. Gender equality is mentioned in the same policy document as one of the values of European Higher Education.

*“[...] Support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions. We will support higher education institutions in enhancing their efforts to promote intercultural understanding, critical thinking, political and religious tolerance, gender equality, and democratic and civic values, in order to strengthen European and global citizenship and lay the foundations for inclusive societies”* (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2015)

The objective of inclusiveness is presented as relevant for overcoming a problem that is described

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*the need for ensuring that higher education is completed successfully by all those who enter it, despite their different backgrounds/initial potential disadvantages [is] as an area where there is still ample room for improvement.*

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both in terms of reduced accessibility of HE for less represented groups and so-called ‘disadvantaged learners’, and bigger challenges in completing education. **Gender inequalities are acknowledged to be an important component in this respect**, together with other dimensions such as ethnic background, disability, and

<sup>1</sup> Members as of 2018 are listed at the official page of the EHEA: [http://ehea.info/page-full\\_members](http://ehea.info/page-full_members) (retrieved March 2020).

socioeconomic status measured often by the income, occupation, educational background, of family/parents of students.

The latest available [report on the implementation of the Bologna Process](#), dated 2018, includes data and information from 48 countries, and stresses how, beyond widening access, the Yerevan Communiqué emphasized the need for ensuring that higher education is completed successfully by all those who enter it, despite their different backgrounds/initial potential disadvantages. According to the latest available data from monitoring, this as an area where there is still ample room for improvement among countries who committed to the Bologna process. The establishment of frameworks for recognising prior non-formal and informal learning or to open higher education for non-traditional learners also need to be improved.

**The gender dimension is embedded in monitoring the progress of implementation.** Even if, given the diversity of socio-economic and cultural realities across the EHEA, each country decides which characteristics to consider when studying the composition of the student body and different societal groups are then identified as ‘under-represented’, **the gender composition of the student population is a cross-cutting dimension all members take into account.** The specific problems which are observed are related to horizontal gender segregation in STEM disciplines in particular, and overall lower employability levels for women after graduation.

The under-representation of male students in the first two cycles of higher education, and the second in particular, are also spotlighted. Fewer men transition from the first cycle to the second, a gap which seems to be gradually closing over the years. Still, there is acknowledgement of the fact that, despite this pattern, women are often underrepresented in the third cycle (doctoral studies) in STEM, which is partially explained by the greater number of third-cycle programmes in male-dominated disciplines. This is interpreted as proof of the existing ‘scissors diagram’ gap<sup>2</sup>, the disproportion between over-representation of women as students in higher education up to the second cycle, and their under-representation in academic careers along the career ladder from researcher’s position to full professorship.

The table and the chart below, also taken from the Implementation Report 2018, show how gender is integrated in the monitoring process and the Scorecard categories behind it. Figure 2, for example, points at the need to take inclusiveness into account across all stages of the Higher Education process and looks at whether education systems monitor the same characteristics of students at entry, during higher education studies, and at graduation. Monitoring of the social dimension at entry level is more frequent than the two other steps, and this is highlighted as an area for improvement.

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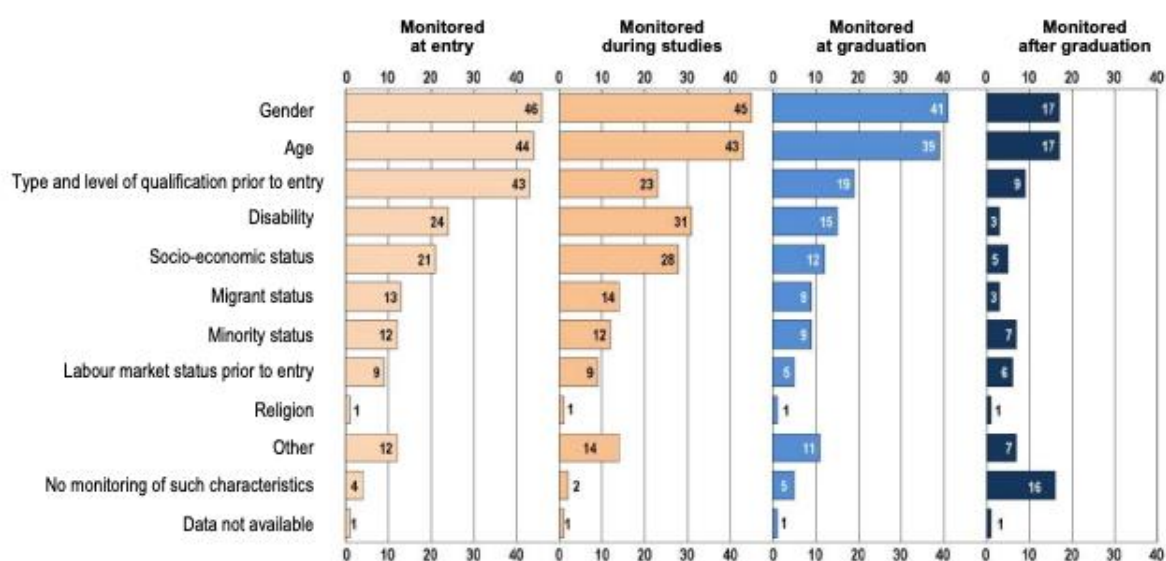
<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2019). She Figures 2018, p.116. Report downloadable at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9540ffa1-4478-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>



**Scorecard categories**

■	The following measures are undertaken to support the access to or increase the participation of under-represented groups in higher education:	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The composition of the student body is monitored based on gender and at least one other under-represented category at entry.</li> <li>2. There are longer-term quantitative policy objectives for the access/participation of students from under-represented groups.</li> <li>3. Under-represented student groups' access to higher education is supported in at least two of the following three ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preferential treatment of specific groups of students during the standard admission process;</li> <li>• Learners are supported in getting the standard higher education entry qualifications;</li> <li>• Learners can access higher education without the standard higher education entry qualifications.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. There is financial support targeted at under-represented groups of students <b>OR</b> mainstream support is provided to more than 50 % of students.</li> </ol>	
■	Three out of the four types of measures are undertaken.	■
■	Two out of the four types of measures are undertaken.	■
■	One out of the four types of measures is undertaken.	■
■	None of the four types of measures are undertaken.	
□	Data not available	

**Figure 1 - Scorecard – Bologna implementation report 2018**



Source: BFUG data collection.

**Notes:**

The figure is based on data supplied by 50 higher education systems.

**Figure 2 - Number of education systems monitoring the composition of the student body, by stage and by students' characteristics, 2016/17 - Bologna implementation Report 2018**

More recently, in the Paris Communiqué in 2018, **Ministers of Education agreed to develop principles and guidelines for the social dimension of HE within the EHEA** and to have them submitted to the 2020 Ministerial Conference for adoption, expected to take place in Italy in June 2020, through the BFUG.

In addition, the Paris Ministerial Conference set an agreement to gather and examine the data on good practices in the area of social dimension and in the same year, BFUG established an **Advisory Group on Social Dimension** in the 2018-2020 Workplan.





The [IDEAS report and database](#) includes 57 good practices undertaken by Universities (mostly from Europe, but with a global scope) with proven evidence-based results to achieve inclusiveness, as part of the EHEA social dimension.

*The IDEAS report conclusions point out the need for putting ethnic and migrant background higher on the social dimension agenda, and the need to shifting from approaches that merely aim at supporting disadvantaged individuals to interventions embedded by “theories of organizational change”.*

The report merges “equity”, “inclusion” and “diversity” frameworks and refers to intersectionality as an interpretative framework as well. “Gender disparities” are listed together with other 3 constraints that on top of households’ financial difficulties, and cultural gaps, “prevent young people to aspire and apply to universities”, such as:

“a different understanding of who is entitled to access university; the

ignorance of the importance of a certain social, cultural and educational capital; the presumption that STEM is inaccessible”.

Interestingly, the report conclusions point out two main aspects:

- **the need for putting higher on the social dimension agenda ethnic and migrant background**, reflecting on the revamping right-wing extremism and the racist attacks from 2015 in Europe and referring to the Paris Declaration released by European Ministries for Culture and Education ([“Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education”](#));
- **the importance of shifting from approaches that merely aim at supporting disadvantaged individuals to interventions embedded by “theories of organizational change”**, recalling the shift from fixing the women to fixing institutions in gender equality policies.

The most recent policy document available is the [Report of the Advisory Group 1 at the 69<sup>th</sup> BFUG Conference](#) held in Kiev earlier this year, where updates are provided on the preparation of the Principles and Guidelines for the Social Dimension in EHEA, possibly to be attached to the Rome Communiqué expected for the summer 2020. Here, equity, diversity, and inclusiveness seem to take a more prominent role; moreover, there is **a focus on the necessity of strengthening data collection to ensure adequate support to the social dimension policy**. Further improvements are recommended to this respect even “understanding the restrictions imposed by national laws” and overall, a mere **“checklist” approach should be counteracted by setting indicators, benchmarks and overall improving the monitoring system**. Consistently with the recommendations from the already mentioned IDEAS report, a call is made for interventions that impact on the institutions through **training of academic and administrative staff**. Finally, it is stressed how social dimension principles should be integrated into the core higher education mission and governance (Learning and Teaching, research, outreach).

To this point, we can observe an analogy with policy trends in gender equality in research which have gradually emphasized on the need, beside ‘fixing the institutions’, for ‘fixing the knowledge’ and integrate a gender dimension in research content and teaching curricula.



## Relevance for CASPER

In view of an alignment with Higher Education Policies in Europe, the Bologna Process and its social dimension in particular, a European certification scheme for gender equality in research could take into consideration the opportunity of giving relevance to **measures to ensure gender balance and diversity of student population, in enrolment, experience and attainment of higher education**. In addition, the scheme should explore **the integration of a gender dimension in teaching methods and practices** which is only marginally covered by existing Certification schemes on gender in research despite its key role in the H2020 Projects on structural change.

The prevailing framework within the WG on the Social Dimension seems to include gender within the equity, diversity and inclusiveness approach, enabling a more intersectional approach. This is aligned with the recent prominence attributed to intersectionality within Gender Equality and Gender in Research policies (see chapters 3 and 4). It suggests to CASPER as well **to integrate a broader and non-binary approach to gender inequalities in research**.

The recent directions highlighted both in the IDEAS report and the report of the Advisory WG1 Report to the 69<sup>th</sup> Conference in Kiev emphasize **the need for going beyond individual support measures** to disadvantaged students in favour of interventions promoting change at the institutional level: reference to adoption of measures to increase the capability of staff members and enhanced monitoring to prevent “checklist” approaches suggests an analogy between the social dimension in HE agenda and the gender equality in research agenda that should be taken into account when devising indicators for the different CASPER scenarios. Overall, it would be very important for CASPER to take the Bologna process and related policies into account as it is an important driver for HE policies in Europe.

## Quality Assurance

The **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)** were adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education in 2005 following a proposal prepared by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in cooperation with the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European University Association (EUA).

Quality assurance is strictly related to the overall objectives of the Bologna Process and the shift towards student-centred learning and teaching, particularly the promotion of European qualifications frameworks, recognition and the promotion of the use of learning outcomes.

In 2012, the Ministerial Communiqué invited the E4 Group (ENQA, EURASHE, ESU and EUA) in cooperation with Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) to prepare an initial proposal for a revised ESG, which included a series of consultation rounds, with the above mentioned organizations and Education Ministries leading to the [2015 version of the ESG](#). (ENQA, EURASHE, ESU, & EUA, 2015)

The Standards are quite broad and generic in terms of scope and content, based on four principles:

- **Autonomy** of HEIs which are holding the primary responsibility for quality and quality assurance
- **Diversity** of higher education systems, institutions, programmes, and students to whom the standards need to respond
- **Quality culture** as the goal, toward which standards are means



- A **multi-stakeholder approach** based on engaging and responding to expectations from students, other stakeholders, and the society.

While all of these principles were present in some form in the ESG 2005, the recognition of diversity and the importance of supporting a quality culture have more focus in the ESG 2015 (EQUIP, 2016).

This evolution reflects a shift and many negotiations and criticisms raised along the years within the academic world, and a **shift from a strictly meant “quality assurance approach” to a softer “quality enhancement”** one, meant to foster academic transparency and accountability (Joao Rosa & Amaral, 2014).

These standards are divided into three clusters, each of those including a set of standards and their respective guidelines, formulated in broad terms

- Standards for internal quality assurance (10 standards)
- Standards for external quality assurance (9)
- Standards for Quality Assurance agencies (7)

The [EQAR \(European Quality Assurance Registry\)](#) has been set up as a crucial component of the EHEA, asking member states to choose agencies from those registered. In addition, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education is also operating.

The [European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education \(ENQA\)](#) is an umbrella organisation which represents quality assurance organisations from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states. ENQA promotes European co-operation in the field of quality assurance in higher education and disseminates information and expertise among its members and towards stakeholders in order to develop and share good practice and to foster the European dimension of quality assurance.

The Bologna Process Monitoring reports from 2015 and 2018 have shown how **quality assurance is an area of dynamic evolution**, featured by **positive trends as far as transparency requirements** in HEIs and development of quality assurance strategies. As far as EQAR is concerned, for example, among the different EHEA countries there are huge fluctuations in the numbers of QA reports - i.e. while 92% of Romanian Research Institutions have a report, only 1% of the Italian ones do so. Anyhow, requirement for higher education institutions to develop and publish quality assurance strategies and evaluation reports is becoming increasingly established as a norm, new national agencies are constantly been established, and the prevailing trend is to have supervisory quality assurance (outcomes of evaluation used to grant permission for programmes or higher education institutions to operate), as only one out of four systems use quality assurance models which are merely aimed at improvement.

Gender equality is not explicitly referenced in the ESG 2015 and the guidelines only refer to diversity meant as the variety of institutions, systems, and programmes. Still, **there are interesting insights from ESG for the evaluation mechanisms that CASPER will have to devise**. The table below presents an overview of the 3 areas of standards. For the Standards on Internal Quality Assurance and External Quality Assurance we have included:

- title and formulation, reporting those included in the ESG 2015 publication
- guidelines, summarized based on what seems to be of relevance for CASPER
- an additional column for the first 2 clusters of Standard, drawing some reflections on how the content could be interpreted from a gender perspective and/or how that standard could be relevant for CASPER

For the last group of Standards on External Quality Assurance Agencies, we just reported the list of standards and their formulation. These could be taken into consideration for those CASPER scenarios





which would foresee the set-up of a dedicated “Certification Agency/Body”: standards 1, 2, and 4 are basic operational requisites for any Agency, Standard 3, 5 and 6 are more ‘advanced’. The work which is being carried out in T3.3 should also reveal to what extent existing Certification Bodies/Agencies have clear-cut internal quality assurance policies or undergo cyclical external reviews.

Overall, ESG points to some aspects which are relevant for CASPER’s scenarios to be considered, both at the level of the targeted Research Organizations and the certification scheme itself:

- Gender mainstreaming of internal existing QA processes that RPOs have already in place to be one of the areas to be assessed in the certification process
- Set up differentiate procedures/processes and allow greater flexibility in cases where a sound internal monitoring of gender equality policies is in place
- Inclusion of different stakeholders in the assessment process preliminary to certification, last but not least students
- Gender knowledge and capacity building of the peer reviewers/evaluators involved in the certification processes to be ensured
- QA procedures and policies applying to the certification scheme itself in all CASPER scenarios to be ensured





Standard Area and Title	Standard Formulation	Excerpt from Guidelines	Gender/diversity intersectionality
<b>Internal Quality Assurance</b>			
1. Policy for quality assurance	Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	Focus on both individuals and organization as a whole Involve external stakeholders	Explicit reference to fight against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff
2. Design and approval of programmes	Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	Study programmes with explicit learning outcomes; promotion of the use of ECTS; link to placement opportunities and to the need of taking into account future employment related/career needs	Could be integrated with a gender dimension to foster attainment and future employability of women
3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	Student centred teaching and learning respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths; - considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate; - flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods; - regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods; - encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate	Diversity mentioned; Indirect reference to fairness in assessment. Opens up to integration of gender and diversity sensitive teaching

Standard Area and Title	Standard Formulation	Excerpt from Guidelines	Gender/diversity intersectionality
<b>Internal Quality Assurance</b>			
		guidance and support from the teacher. Reference to consistent and fair assessment of students	
4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification. and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.	Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility.	Particularly relevant for the Social Dimension.
5. Teaching Staff	Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair processes for staff recruitment.	Sets up and follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching; - offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff; - encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; - encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.	Connected to diversity of students. Resonates and it is consistent with ERA priorities on Gender Equalities (recruitment and career progression)
6. Learning resources and students support	Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.	Importance of learning infrastructure for students. The needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities), and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources and student support.	Related to diversity of students and Social Dimension
7. Information management	Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.	Information and data to be collected and analysed on- Key performance indicators; - Profile of the student population; - Student progression, success and drop-out rates; - Students' satisfaction with their programmes;	Essential for monitoring of Social Dimension and gender gaps (as highlighted in the paragraph above)



Standard Area and Title	Standard Formulation	Excerpt from Guidelines	Gender/diversity intersectionality
Internal Quality Assurance			
		- Learning resources and student support available; - Career paths of graduates.	
8. Public information	Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.	Institutions provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer and the selection criteria for them, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students as well as graduate employment information	Seems to resonate with the emphasis placed on gender-sensitive communication within Institutional Change programs and GEPs
9. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.	Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students, including the changing needs of society	Potential entry point for gender-sensitive teaching and curriculum design
10. Cyclical external quality assurance	Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.	Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, institutions ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.	It resonates with the assessment-design-implementation-monitoring logic underlying the GEAR toolkit

**Table 1 - Analysis of ESG Internal quality assurance standards**



Standard Area and Title	Standard Formulation	Excerpt from Guidelines	Gender/Diversity/Intersectionality and/or relevance for CASPER
<b>External Quality Assurance</b>			
3. Consideration of internal quality assurance	External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG	External QA as functional Institutional/internal quality assurance, so it should rely on standards from section 1	Ensure and assess the effective mainstreaming of gender and diversity within the internal QA standards
4. Designing methodologies fit for purpose	External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bear in mind the level of workload and cost that they will place on institutions;</li> <li>- take into account the need to support institutions to improve quality;</li> <li>- allow institutions to demonstrate this improvement;</li> <li>- result in clear information on the outcomes and the follow-up.</li> </ul> More flexibility should be allowed from external QA agencies to HEIs which have already in place Internal QA procedures	Useful to consider for a Certification system in general. Last point is interesting as it would suggest to differentiate procedures/processes and allow greater flexibility in cases where a sound internal monitoring of gender equality policies is in place
5. Implementing processes	External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a self-assessment or equivalent;</li> <li>- an external assessment including a site visit;</li> <li>- a report resulting from the external assessment;</li> <li>- a consistent follow-up</li> </ul>	Emphasis on follow up: “external quality assurance does not end with the report by the experts. The report provides clear guidance for institutional action. Agencies have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution. The nature of the follow-up will depend on the design of the external quality assurance”.	Baseline features to be considered for all CASPER systems to be devised.
6. Peer review experts	External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).	Peer Experts should be from academic, administrative staff, students, experts/professionals; they should be carefully selected; have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task; supported by appropriate training and/or briefing. The agency ensures the independence of the experts by implementing a mechanism of no-conflict of-interest. Value of involving international experts	Baseline features to be considered for all CASPER systems to be devised. Students involvement also relevant (lack of students’ involvement highlighted as weak point in Athena SWAN, (Tsouroufli 2019). Gender expertise of training of peer experts particularly relevant. Diversity in type of professional profiles also interesting to be take into consideration



Standard Area and Title	Standard Formulation	Excerpt from Guidelines	Gender/Diversity/Intersectionality and/or relevance for CASPER
<b>External Quality Assurance</b>			
7. Criteria for outcomes	Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.	equity and reliability as key values: outcomes of external quality assurance are based on pre-defined and published criteria, which are interpreted consistently and are evidence-based. Depending on the external quality assurance system, outcomes may take different forms, for example, recommendations, judgements or formal decisions.	Baseline features to be considered for all CASPER systems to be devised.
8. Reporting	Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.	As external QA ultimate goal is action oriented from the involved HEI, reports should be clear and evidence based, and contain: context description (to help locate the higher education institution in its specific context); - description of the individual procedure, including experts involved; - evidence, analysis and findings; - conclusions; - features of good practice, demonstrated by the institution; - recommendations for follow-up action.	Baseline features to be considered for all CASPER systems to be devised.
9. Complaints and appeals	Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.	Fairness and accountability from External QA Agencies are safeguarded if: Institutions need to have access to processes that allow them to raise issues of concern with the agency; the agencies, need to handle such issues in a professional way by means of a clearly defined process that is consistently applied. A complaints procedure allows an institution to state its dissatisfaction about the conduct of the process or those carrying it out. In an appeals procedure, the institution questions the formal outcomes of the process, where it can demonstrate that the outcome is not based on sound evidence, that criteria have not been correctly applied or that the processes have not been consistently implemented	Baseline features to be considered for all CASPER systems to be devised.

**Table 2 - Analysis of ESG External quality assurance standards**



Standard Area and Title	Standard Formulation
<b>Standards and Guidelines for External Quality Assurance Agencies</b>	
1. Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance	Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.
2. Official Status	Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.
3. Independence	Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.
4. Thematic Analysis	Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.
5. Resources	Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.
6. Internal Quality Assurance and Professional conduct	Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.
7. Cyclical external review	Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

**Table 3 - Analysis of ESG standards for External Quality Assurance Agencies**





## 2.2. Recent developments in HEI policies in Europe: integration with Research and Innovation?

In this section we highlight an interesting trend towards an integration of HEIs and R&I policies that CASPER scenarios should take into account.

As the previous chapters have shown, **universities have been and are the target stakeholders of two separate policy areas which have been operated in separated silos until now.**

The Bologna Process and EHEA set soft policies for the educational/teaching component of European Universities' mission, and have worked on setting European Quality Frameworks, promoting student centred teaching, and transparent, effective and coordinated quality enhancement practices. In this framework, gender and diversity are part of the so called "social dimension" of education. On the other hand, the 6 ERA priorities cover scientific research and therefore the areas of researcher's careers and mobility, open science, research transfer and scientific cooperation with third countries. Gender equality is a self-standing priority among these (see chapter 3).

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*Universities are the target stakeholders of two separate policy areas which have been operating in separated silos until now: the Bologna Process and EHEA set soft policies for the educational and teaching component [while] on the other hand, the 6 ERA priorities cover scientific research.*

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Already in 2017, a **Communication from the Commission to the EP, the Council and EESC on "a renewed EU agenda for Higher Education"** (EC, COM/2017/0247) **stressed the importance of strengthening the relationship between teaching and research**, by way of integrating quality frameworks and funding systems. **Four main policy goals** have been defined in this regard: Tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development; Building inclusive and connected higher education systems; Ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation; Supporting effective and efficient higher education systems. The third one, in particular, on HEI contribution to innovation, points at the integration between education and research:

*"Research institutes, research-intensive universities and universities of applied science contribute to innovation in different, inter-related ways; and within and across multiple geographical boundaries. Strengthening the contribution of higher education to innovation requires action across all higher education institutions' activities — education, research and engagement with the wider world. Institutions need to build an outward-looking culture of innovation and entrepreneurship."*  
(EC, COM/2017/0247)

Research and teaching integration is also recalled within the policy objective of effectiveness of HEI when good practices are mentioned:

*"Other initiatives aim to strengthen the relationship between teaching and research by better integrating quality frameworks and funding systems. Funding initiatives have also been used to build links between HEIs and outside partners, promote research-based teaching, support inter-disciplinary education and research and bring practical innovation into the classroom."* (ibid)

One year later, the Paris Communiqué in 2018 outlined the joint vision of education ministers from 48 European countries for a **more ambitious European Higher Education Area by 2025**.



It called for “integrated transnational cooperation in higher education, research and innovation” together with inclusive and innovative approach to learning and teaching and a sustainable future through higher education.

More concretely, **the Paris Communiqué mandated BFUG to establish interaction with the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) by 2020 in order to develop synergies between the EHEA and the European Research Area (ERA).**

As we learn from the meetings of the 67<sup>th</sup> BFUG meeting in 2019 in Helsinki, no specific group had been set up in the work plan of the BFUG to address this issue, but **BFUG and ERAC co-chairs met informally in September 2019 in Brussels** and “considered it important to start enhancing interaction in a practical way without introducing burdensome new structures. It was felt **that in spite of the differences in governance and working methods much can be done to increase collaboration and interaction between EHEA and ERA**”(BFUG Meeting LXVII, 2019a)

Earlier in 2019, the **meeting of Directors-Generals for Higher Education** was organised back to back with the very **first joint meeting of the EU Directors-General for Higher Education and the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC)**. A joint conference was organized in cooperation with the European Commission on 1 October 2019. **The aim of this conference was to start a dialogue between these two sectors, education and research, by bringing together policy makers** to discuss three major game-changers and find common ground and enhance cooperation around these and other relevant topics: openness, digitalization and artificial intelligence.

*During a joint conference of the EU Directors-General for Higher Education and the ERAC Committee, the European Commission emphasised that its new structure combines education, research and innovation in the same portfolio which will give new opportunities for developing synergies between education and research and innovation policies. The aim of the conference was to start a dialogue between the two sectors.*

It was noted in the discussion that silos between the education and research sectors are real and the dialogue and interaction between the ERAC and the BFUG should continue. **The European Commission emphasised that its new structure combines education, research and innovation in the same portfolio which will give new opportunities for developing synergies between education and research and innovation policies.** It was considered whether it would be feasible to organise joint meetings of the BFUG and ERAC, and other platforms for an exchange of views and for systematic flow of information should be set up.

The available **Draft version of Rome Communiqué**, whose finalised version is expected for the summer 2020, reiterates:

*“We commit to further developing cooperation with the European Research Area and call for BFUG to continue to work with the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) to foster better dialogue between education and research policies. Focus should be put on developing research-based learning, enhancing openness and meeting the SDGs”. (BFUG Meeting LXVII, 2019b)*

A closer integration and convergence between EHEA and ERA policy frameworks promises an increased prominence of gender equality and intersectionality in EHEA education in the future, given the fact that gender equality is one of the six ERA priorities and that the need to adopt an intersectional approach is increasingly acknowledged (see chapter 3), both in recent ERA policy developments and in the new EU Strategy on Gender Equality (Chapter 4).



## Entrepreneurial and engaged universities: a crosscutting approach in EHEA and ERA

As mentioned, the Bologna Process/EHEA and ERA frameworks both incorporate a gender perspective although this is more consistently the case of ERA, while BFUG and EHEA documents embed gender as one aspect of the Social Dimension. Instead, a **crosscutting issue** both policy areas have more clearly in common, is a **vision of entrepreneurial universities open to their respective territories**, responding to so called Open Innovation frameworks.

The concept was **supported also by the European Economic and Social Committee in 2015**, with the opinion on “Engaged Universities shaping Europe” (European Economic and Social Committee, 2015), where the emphasis was placed on **“civic universities” and their engagement with civil society** at large, and the fact that Universities should both be knowledge producers and ‘receivers’, incorporating the needs and the creativity expressed within their territories. The value of such an approach is presented in terms of increased responsiveness to local labour market needs and equity/ accessibility of HE to disadvantaged groups.

In the already quoted **EC Communication for a Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education** (European Commission, 2017) the **need to promote the role of HEIs as “entrepreneurial actors”** is underlined and described as consisting of “facilitating connections between academics, entrepreneurs and public authorities, to align their educational offer to needs identified in smart specialisation strategies, seize opportunities for innovation in priority sectors, and help local businesses and other organizations understand and adopt new ways of thinking”.

As clarified in chapter 3 on the ERA, the specific priority on “Optimal circulation, access, and transfer of scientific knowledge” is indeed making use of indicators such as the level of Research/Industry cooperation in research and transfer to market activities. A recent [policy brief](#) by Horizon 2020 project GENDERACTION also makes use of a broader scope on Gender in Scientific Research *and Innovation*, and a [report on Open Science and Innovation](#) goes to a similar direction.

Interestingly, **such an approach is also becoming subject of certification/awarding efforts**, as shown in the following text boxes on ACEEU and EIT Label.

ACEEU

The Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities (ACEEU) is an accreditation programme for entrepreneurship and engagement at institutional level. ACEEU’s mission is “to promote cultural change, to accelerate institutional development and to amplify the recognition of excellence” through its accreditation system. It offers accreditation both for “entrepreneurship” and for “engagement”: institutions can apply for dual or single accreditation (on one of the two aspects) which lasts for 5 years. There are two levels of accreditation: a regular one and a premium one, awarded for exceptional performance.

ACEEU describes the entrepreneurial university as “oriented towards and strategically positioned to deliver a range of societal contributions, with a focus on economic impacts” where “research leads to income and intellectual contributions with a high potential for commercialisation”. An engaged university, instead, is “oriented towards and strategically positioned to deliver a range of societal contributions, benefits and impacts”, and in it “education integrates external stakeholders and promotes a wide range of career opportunities, including the private, public and not-for-profit sector”.

ACEEU accreditation follows a four-phase process, including application, self-evaluation, peer visit, and final evaluation. This process has been created thanks to the cooperation between experts from various backgrounds in the fields of entrepreneurship, collaborative innovation, and university-business cooperation. The evaluation is set on 5 dimensions: Orientation and strategy, People and organisational capacity, Drivers and enablers, Education, research and third-stream activities, and innovation and impact.

To its accredited members, ACEEU provides a series of benefits: the ACEEU Marketing Guidebook; access to case studies and tools for institutional development; free attendance of ACEEU organised or supported events, such as the annual conference of the University Industry Innovation Network, the largest of its kind in Europe. <https://www.aceeu.org/>

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a body created by the European Union in 2008, with an “educational mission to educate a new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators in Europe with an entrepreneurial mindset”. With more than 1500 partners, the EIT is Europe’s largest innovation network. One of the main added values of the EIT is “to integrate the education dimension into the innovation web”.

The EIT Label is a certificate of quality awarded to excellent educational Master and PhD programmes focused on innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and leadership and which are based on the knowledge triangle paradigm – the integration of business, education and research.

The applicants must provide a self-assessment report accompanied by a selected portfolio of evidences, which is reviewed by a team of external experts nominated by EIT. The evaluation reports are then submitted to the EIT Labelling committee for comments. The EIT Director finally awards or renews the EIT Label for each submitted programme. The assessment of the Master and Doctoral courses is related to five groups of quality criteria: The EIT Overarching Learning Outcomes, Robust entrepreneurship education, Highly integrated and innovative ‘learning-by-doing’ curricula, International and cross-organisational mobility, Outreach strategy and access policy. The EIT Overarching Learning Outcomes specify that programmes should ensure the achievement of skills and competencies in Making Value and Sustainability Judgments, Creativity, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Research, Intellectual Transforming and Leadership, all related to the field of their studies. These overarching intended learning outcomes complement the intended learning outcomes of the Qualification Framework of European Higher Education Area (the Bologna framework). <https://eit.europa.eu/>


 The logo for the EIT Label, featuring the text "EIT Label" in white, oriented vertically on a blue background that has a white curved shape on its left side.

## Relevance for CASPER

The scenario of an increasing policy integration between EHEA and ERA policies should be taken into account within CASPER. As the background of the project and its conceptual framework have mostly relied on ERA policies, **paying attention to developments under EHEA and the Future European Education Area is also important**. This could imply, for example and as already highlighted, including Teaching and Services to Students (recruitment, counselling, etc.) as areas to be assessed via gender and intersectionality indicators within the certification/awarding process.

**CASPER scenarios could also take the “engaged and entrepreneurial university framework” into consideration** in different ways, for example by testing the relevance of specific gender-sensitive indicators related to technology transfer and so called ‘Third Mission’ activities to be integrated into the designed certification schemes. These could become issues to be further investigated with stakeholders within WP4 or during the co-creation process with stakeholders in WP5 and 6.

**Such a choice explicitly raises the issue of positioning the project amidst the current broader debate on what agenda is actually more prominent between gender equality and economic development/growth**. The use of the ‘economic case’ for gender equality (Elomäki, 2015) is challenging, it requires discerning how and when it is strategic to leverage on business arguments/frameworks as windows of opportunities to promote gender equality, and under what conditions the transformative potential of gender equality policies risks to be bent in favour of the business agenda or even instrumentalized (Lombardo, Meier & Verloo, 2012).



## 3. ERA – The European Research Area

### 3.1. Methodological note

In this section, documents connected to the ERA policy frameworks are summarised in relation to gender equality. For the purpose of this study, we made use of documents analysing, expanding or reporting about the ERA policy frameworks, and not the policy documents themselves, even if mention is made to the latter ones for the sake of clarity.

This review is structured following the ERA priorities, as summarised in the ERA Progress Report 2018 (European Commission, 2019a; 2019b), integrated with policy papers and briefs by ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation in the years 2018 and 2019.

### 3.2. Institutional framework

As reported in the ERA Progress Report 2018 (European Commission, 2019a), according to the European Commission's 2012 Communication: "A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth"<sup>3</sup>, the European Research Area (ERA) can be defined as "a unified research area open to the world based on the Internal Market, in which researchers, scientific knowledge and technology circulate freely and through which the Union and its Member States strengthen their scientific and technological bases, their competitiveness and their capacity to collectively address grand challenges."

**In 2015, the European Council endorsed the ERA Roadmap 2015-2020<sup>4</sup>**, supporting European member states and associated countries in structuring their implementation of the six ERA priorities at national level through ERA national action plans (NAPs) and strategies. Monitoring of ERA roadmap implementation is integrated into the ERA progress reports, on the basis of headline indicators proposed by the European Research and Innovation Advisory Committee (ERAC).

There was no explicit definition of research quality or excellence in the documents reviewed for this task; still, **the underlying conditions for ensuring excellent research are set by the 6 ERA implementation priorities**, as defined in 2012, and then integrated in 2015 with the 6<sup>th</sup> priority on international cooperation (formerly the "international dimension" cross-cutting theme):

1. More effective national research systems
2. Optimal transnational cooperation and competition, including "jointly addressing grand challenges" (2a) and "research infrastructures" (2b)
3. An open labour market for researchers
4. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research
5. Optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge, including "knowledge circulation" (5a) and "open access" (5b)
6. International cooperation

Progress in achieving each priority is monitored every two years, using both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

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<sup>3</sup> At: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/reinforced-european-research-area-partnership-excellence-and-growth>

<sup>4</sup> <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8975-2015-INIT/en/pdf>



Indeed, as mentioned in the Progress report (European Commission, 2019a), “the **building of the ERA is an evolving process that recognises the heterogeneity of national research and innovation systems** across Europe, as well as differences in the implementation of ERA priorities”.

Despite recognition of these differences, **the objective is increasing the convergence of Member States on ERA priorities**, through the mechanism of National Action Plans (NAPs) as policy coordination tools with Member States.

**ERA policies are the outcome of continuous coordinated consultations** with national MS in a similar way as it is the case for the Bologna Process and EHEA: the ERAC (European Research Area Committee) is the strategic policy advisory committee set up to advise the Council, the Commission and member states on research and innovation issues in the European Research Area framework. ERAC is co-chaired by the Commission and an elected representative from a member state. The Council provides its secretariat.

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*ERA [...] recognises the heterogeneity of national research and innovation systems across Europe, as well as differences in the implementation of its priorities. [...] the objective is increasing the convergence of Member States on ERA priorities through the mechanism of National Action Plans (NAPs) as policy coordination tools with Member States.*

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ERAC currently has three Standing Working Groups on Open Science and Innovation, Human Resources and Mobility and Gender in Research and Innovation and a Strategic Forum for International Cooperation with Third Countries (SFIC). All the ERA groups report on the implementation of NAPs in their priority.

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## Relevance for CASPER

The ERA overarching upward policy coordination objective is a first element to highlight, enhancing CASPER’s relevance and role in its very remit of setting up a tool assuring consistency across countries on a set of common objectives and practices relating to one of the ERA priorities, namely Priority 4, on gender.

Furthermore, while priorities different from Priority no. 4 do not generally tackle gender, diversity or inclusion issues, with just a few minor exceptions (e.g., in priority 3) – some of the topics and objectives of the various priorities are more or less directly connected to (or partially depending on) achieving better gender equality. Their achievement could thus benefit from a tool like the certification system CASPER is going to explore. In terms of stakeholders’ engagement and dialogue, **following developments from and interacting with SWGs on Human Resources and Mobility and Gender will be important for CASPER**. If in any of the devised CASPER scenarios, the aspect of connecting an EU level certification system with the Scientific Cooperation activities with Third Countries would emerge, then SFIC could also be included as stakeholder to be consulted.

## 3.3. PRIORITY 1: More effective national research systems

While originally mostly revolving around the support to open competition, the 2015 ERA Roadmap has identified the “strengthening of the evaluation of research and innovation policies and seeking complementarities between, and rationalisation of, instruments at EU and national levels’ as the top action for Priority 1”. **The Roadmap recommends that Member States better align national and European policies and priorities, and optimise the use of public investments in R&I**. The role of the European Commission is to develop policy tools that facilitate partnerships and mutual learning.





### ERA Priority 1 Indicators

The Headline indicator identified to assess progress on Priority 1 is the Adjusted Research Excellence Indicator (AREI), covering:

- ERC grants per public R&D expenditures, considered “a good proxy to appreciate the success of countries in securing ERA-wide project-based competitive funding”
- participation in Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships, considered “a good proxy to appreciate the extent of researcher exchanges across national, sectoral and disciplinary boundaries, regardless of career stage”
- PCT patent applications per population (OECD, 2016), considered “a good output indicator to capture the innovation of national R&I systems”
- the share of the top 10 % most cited publications per total publications (CWTS), considered a good proxy of the excellence of a country’s research impact”.

Some other complementary indicators are identified in the Progress Report: Governments Budget Allocations for R&D (GBARD) and European Innovation Scoreboard Summary Innovation Index (EIS-SII).

Other highlighted issues concern the **increased use of international peer review for national funding allocation**, and the frequent national efforts to improve the quality and relevance of research systems through normative reforms supporting or forcing mergers, or the establishment of national supporting agencies. As for the main results included in the report for this area, the following can be mentioned (European Commission, 2019a):

- Despite improvements in recent years, **alignment on ERA priorities and across multiple R&I national strategic documents** is still to be enhanced.
- **Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of national R&I priorities and funding** is central to improving efficiency and effectiveness of national research systems.
- The R&I system must be supported through **sufficient and consistent funding** in order to prevent deterioration of national systems and avoid the growth of performance gaps between ERA countries.
- The **linkages between key R&I national actors** have to be further improved to ensure the quality and effectiveness of R&I systems.

### Gender Equality and relevance for CASPER

The role of the CASPER certification system as a tool supporting alignment, optimisation of public investments (e.g., avoiding the waste of women’s talent) and facilitating mutual learning can be highlighted with respect to priority 1.

The emphasis on the evaluation of research systems and innovation policies to improve their effectiveness is also a good discursive hook for the CASPER certification system.

Tools like CASPER, supporting greater women’s contribution to improvements under these performance indicators, and thus to national systems’ effectiveness, could be highlighted: indeed, missing out such contribution is talent waste, and waste of a relevant educational investments, weighing on often declining national budgets for research.



Furthermore, **sex-disaggregated data collection** of the 3 AREI indicators could be part of the set of indicators to be used in the certification process, taking into consideration gender related limitations of indicators such as the share of most cited publications, as highlighted by literature on gender in research (i.e. [Elsevier tool on Gender Bias in Academic Publishing](#)).

However, it is to be stressed that gender and diversity are never mentioned with respect to this first, crucial priority.

### 3.4. PRIORITY 2: Optimal transnational cooperation and competition

As stated in the Progress report (European Commission, 2019a), “Transnational cooperation and coordination of research activities between ERA countries has a number of goals, including solving grand challenges that cannot be addressed by separate efforts of countries, improving excellence and quality of scientific outputs, improving access to knowledge, expertise and research infrastructures, developing common rules, procedures and standards and others”. The initial approach was to target specific cooperation fields and programmes (ESA, CERN, EURATOM, ESO, EMBL), while at present the focus has shifted to cooperation between national agencies in specific disciplines, and research funds have been reallocated from national agencies to pan-European cooperation and funding schemes such as COST, EUREKA, a number of JPIs (Joint Programme Initiatives), ERA-NET, and the European Joint Programme (EJP).

#### ERA Priority 2 Indicators

As for sub-priority 2a (jointly addressing grand challenges), the headline indicator chosen is GBARD (Gross Budget Allocation to Research and Development) allocated to transnationally coordinated research expressed in euros per FTE researcher in the public sector. Complementary indicators include: Member State participation in Public-to-Public Partnerships/P2P (investment in Public-to-Public Partnerships) and Co-publications with other ERA countries (number of co-publications involving a given ERA country and at least one co-author from another ERA country).

As for sub-priority 2b (Research Infrastructures), the headline indicator chosen is the availability of national roadmaps for ESFRI (European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures) projects. Complementary indicators include the participation in ESFRI projects (early development phase projects aiming to establish RIs) and the participation in ESFRI landmarks (implementation phase RIs requiring continued financial support for operation).

Main results stressed by the Progress Report 2018 in this area show some progress in addressing grand challenges. At the same time, clearer national governance structures and more robust frameworks for evaluating and monitoring the impact of P2P networks at national level are found to be needed. As to research infrastructures, growth is recorded as well.

#### Gender Equality and relevance for CASPER

Priority 2 is presented with no connection to gender equality. Emphasis on synchronisation, and on monitoring and evaluation tools can be stressed, as it pervades all ERA priorities and is in tune with CASPER efforts. Additionally, **CASPER could consider including a gendered version of some of the indicators from sub priority 2a**, such as contribution to pan-European cooperation projects and funding schemes and joint publications or co-publications.



### 3.5. PRIORITY 3: An open labour market for researchers

**Priority 3 highlights mobility issues and sets objectives strongly connected to gender equality.**

The lack of transparent, open and merit-based recruitment is considered as the main problem, reducing possibilities for mobility and therefore reducing the attractiveness of research careers as well as hindering gender equality. **Gender inequalities are indeed presented both as outcomes of existing problems and part of the problem itself**, as it is stated that “Additional barriers identified included human resource policies that hinder career prospects for young researchers, as well as ‘inadequate gender equality practices, social security obstacles and insufficient academia-business mobility.’” (European Commission, 2019a).

Policy solutions to the identified problems are twofold and mentioned in the invitation from the EC to MS to:

- Remove legal and other barriers to the application of **open, transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers**
- Create an enabling framework for the implementation of the **HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) incorporating the Charter & Code**, which first of all requires employer organisations to apply the principles of transparent and merit-based recruitment of researchers.

The HRS4R and the Charter and code include reference to gender inequalities and some specific indicators (see Chapter 6.4).

#### ERA Priority 3 indicators

The Headline indicator identified to assess progress on Priority 3 is the number of researcher job postings from a given country that are advertised through the EURAXESS job portal per 1,000 researchers in the public sector in that country. It measures active international recruitment efforts by a given country’s institutions that are conducted using open, transparent and merit-based processes.

Complementary indicators are the share of doctoral candidates with a citizenship of another EU Member State (assessing international mobility of students), and the share of researchers expressing satisfaction for the hiring procedures in their institution as open, transparent and merit-based, which is of course highly relevant for gender equality and inclusion issues in general.

The results presented in the 2018 report (European Commission, 2019a) confirmed the existence of large gaps and heterogeneity between the EU countries, explained by differences among higher education and research systems, national economic developments and public budgets for research.

#### Gender Equality and relevance for CASPER

Priority 3 is strictly linked to key issues in gender equality. Harmonisation and coordination issues across countries, in particular concerns regarding recruitment, funding principles and procedures, are relevant, which in turns highlight CASPER mission. The relevance of fair recruitment procedures for this priority leads to emphasising the role of the HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R), including the Charter and Code, for the fulfilment of ERA objectives. The Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment tool through which has been added to the strengthened HRS4R is also particularly relevant; the **different possible connection strategies of the CASPER system to the HRS4R**, in this perspective, appear as an important topic. Indeed, within the ERAC SWG on Human Resources and Mobility a discussion is open on how to make HRS4R more gender-sensitive and dialogue with the SWG on Gender on this matter is about to start. All these aspects are explored in more detail in Chapter 6.4 of this report.





### 3.6. PRIORITY 4: Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research

Given the direct correspondence of priority 4 with CASPER objectives, indicators, key issues and results will be reported in more detail as the proposed indicators are of particular importance for the CASPER scenarios.

The 2018 ERA progress report (European Commission, 2019a) stresses that “guaranteeing a **balanced gender representation in all aspects of research** contributes to excellence, positively influences research outcomes and impact, and promotes the acceptance of scientific insights (EIGE, 2016). More gender diversity is being recognised as having a positive impact on innovation policies (Lee & Pollitzer, 2016), financial stability (Diouf & Pépin, 2017), analysis of research content (EC, 2014) and innovation (Díaz-García et al., 2013).”

**The framework sets out actions to be undertaken at European, national, regional and local levels** in order to continue the promotion of gender equality. In the area of R&I, the framework is structured around three main related objectives, namely:

- **gender equality in careers** (to remove possible bias and discrimination and ensure equal opportunities)
- **gender balance in decision-making bodies**
- **the integration of the gender dimension in research content**

The SWG on Gender in Research is providing policy advice to the ERAC on gender equality in research and innovation. GENDERACTION, a project funded by Horizon 2020 supporting the networking of national representatives and resource centres on gender in R&I, and working in complementarity with ERAC SWG GRI, is the other strategic reference point connected to Priority 4. It recently published a report on the implementation of gender equality in NAPs (Wroblewski 2018, Wroblewski 2019). All GENDERACTION recommendations are considered relevant for CASPER.

#### ERA Priority 4 indicators

##### **Headline indicator: share of women in grade A**

As reported in the ERA technical report

*“the Headline indicator identified by ERAC for Priority 4 is the share of women in Grade A research positions in the higher education sector, as a percentage of all such research positions. Longitudinal analyses (in combination with the share of female PhD graduates) are suggested to measure the degree to which a glass ceiling still limits the professional advancement of women in research.*

*The “optimum” balance has been identified at around 50% (from 40 to 60%), because “a high share of females does not necessarily mean fair recruitment processes etc., but could reflect the unattractiveness of posts for men, for example because of low pay”.* (European Commission, 2019a)

##### **Complementary indicator: gender dimension in research content**

In the ERA technical report it is stated that

*“the global proportions (i.e., for the world in the bibliographic database of scientific papers used for computing the indicator) have been established as the reference level and set to a value of 1.00. Accordingly, a score of 1.10 shows that research from the country in question integrates a gender dimension 10 % more often than the global norm, while a score of 0.90 shows that research from the country in question integrates a gender dimension 10 % less often than the global norm. These scores*



*have been weighted to accommodate the different levels of relevance of gender dimensions across domains of research, so that a country publishing many papers in physics will not be penalised for integrating the gender dimension less frequently than a country publishing many papers in social sciences, where gender dimension is more relevant and therefore integrated more frequently.”* (European Commission, 2019a)

### **Complementary indicator: share of female PhD graduates**

The second complementary indicator for Priority 4 is the share of female PhD graduates to the total number of PhD graduates which is used to monitor achievements towards gender balance in research careers and reducing vertical segregation (shares in the range from 40 % to 60 % are considered as reflecting gender parity).

It has to be noted how a recent report from the GENDERACTION project has spotlighted the ERA monitoring mechanism of NAPs for its approach limited to the headline indicator and the 2 complementary indicators while progress on the second objective of removing structural obstacles to women’s career progression is not taken into consideration enough (Wroblewski, 2019). The report has provided a set of additional indicators that are worth for CASPER to be taken into account.

### **Additional policy measures used to assess progress**

Besides the three general indicators, several policy highlights are also covered in the report to account for the situation in the different countries as concerns a set of additional relevant aspects in the gender and science relation:

- Gender in research programmes and training (measures regarding gender equality for scientists and/or the integration of the gender dimension in research content in their evaluation criteria)
- Gender action plans/policies (Gender Equality Plans/GEPs and related policies financed either at national or EU level)
- Wage gap (reduction in the gender pay gap)
- Resources for career progression (initiatives, programmes and policies to promote the enrolment and retention of women in science, also including work-life balance measures)
- Gender balance in decision making (initiatives and programmes addressing the low representation of women in decision-making bodies together with unconscious/implicit bias in evaluation)

As reported by the Progress report 2018 (European Commission, 2019a), more gender initiatives addressing different issues (e.g. unconscious/implicit gender bias; inclusion of gender aspects in research, etc.) have been adopted across ERA countries in recent years with various degrees of progress. However, **to date under EU laws it is not mandatory in all countries to adopt specific policy tools to implement gender equality initiatives.**

In November 2018, the ERAC SWG-GRI drafted the Report on the implementation of Council Conclusions of 1 December 2015 on Advancing Gender Equality in the ERA (ERAC, 2018), and – based on report results on the situation at national level – formulated a series of recommendations to close gaps between countries, improve policy monitoring and evaluation and define concrete indicators for ERA priority 4 to be reviewed in ERA NAPs. Member States are encouraged to provide National financial incentives to Research Organizations for institutional change processes and Gender Equality Plans. Reinforcement of the Strengthening of the ERA part of Horizon Europe with incentives to EU13 countries are also called for, together with the use of the Policy Support Facility, specifically a Mutual Learning Exercise (MLE) by ERAC, to exchange good practices on gender in research.



## GENDERACTION recommendations for the review of the ERA roadmap from a gender perspective

As reported in the GENDERACTION Briefing Paper of April 2019, *“the ERA Roadmap 2015-2020 is coming under review in 2020 with a view to developing a new Communication for the period beyond 2020, which should propose revised ERA priorities and ERA monitoring mechanism at national and EU level, to be followed by Council Conclusions on the new ERA advisory structure. The ERA Roadmap has been a catalyst for gender equality policy and measures in many EU countries, especially those where such measures had not been in place previously.”* (GENDERACTION, 2019a)

In proposing a set of recommendations for the review process, the importance of **intersectionality** is particularly highlighted as a guiding principle for future strategies. According to the GENDERACTION Briefing paper (GENDERACTION, 2019a): “intersectional approaches to gender equality (...) are rarely adopted at policy or institutional level in the ERA, with the exception of a few countries. The experience of the current institutional change projects funded through Horizon 2020 and Framework Programme 7, including most recent experience gathered at the GENDERACTION Mutual Learning Workshop on Best Practice Exchange to Support Institutional Change, suggests that intersectionality is crucial for addressing the multiple axes of inequality that researchers experience.”

GENDERACTION recommendations for future ERA policy frameworks (GENDERACTION, 2019a):

- Gender equality and gender mainstreaming must continue as one of the policy priorities for the future European Research Area
- **The Innovation Sector should be included in the European Research and Innovation Area with concrete actions and indicators** (for more recommendations on the Business Enterprise Sector, see below)
- The **budget** for implementing gender equality plans should be increased in Horizon Europe compared to Horizon 2020, given the importance of the added value of European cooperation among institutions. Member States should use European Social Fund to complement these Commission efforts at national level, by supporting institutional changes through gender equality plans or similar instruments
- The new Horizon Europe broad line on “advanced strategies and innovative methods for gender equality in all social, economic and cultural domains, and to deal with gender biases and gender-based violence” needs to ensure **regular annual calls** which allow enough funding for an appropriate number of projects, in order to meet the objective of providing innovative solutions for gender equality challenges in the EU and worldwide
- **Policy exchange, mutual learning and coordination** among Member States, Associated Countries and the Commission has proven crucial. A dedicated working group of national and Commission representatives must continue, with clear mandate and increased cooperation with other ERA stakeholders, most notably the umbrella organizations gathered in the ERA Stakeholder Platform
- **Intersectional approaches to gender equality** must be adopted at institutional, national and EU level, addressing issues of race and ethnicity, including migration and refugees, LGBT+ and disability. Gender equality plans funded by the Commission and at national level should incorporate intersectionality as an obligation. Opportunities for sharing experience among



responsible staff, research and other forms of support should be supported both at the EU and MS level.

Another set of GENDERACTION recommendations (GENDERACTION, 2019a) addresses the **importance of measuring equality** and addressing the divide across EU countries in the implementation, but also in the very conceptualisation and prioritisation of equality-oriented measures, including the **development of contextual indicators**:

- Member States, Associated Countries and the Commission must step up efforts for **gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a priority** for the European Research Area post 2020, particularly in the Widening countries
- Specifically, it is necessary to review how progress in this priority is defined and **develop adequate indicators** which should be complemented by indicators reflecting contextual factors such as R&D intensity. ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation should be involved in this process
- A **European study** should be commissioned from the Joint Research Centre to examine the correlation among proportion of women among PhD holders, researchers, professors in Grade A and in the Business Enterprise Sector (BES) and the implementation of gender equality polices as well as the research and innovation intensity
- In implementing Horizon Europe, the Commission should adopt concrete measures to **incentivise the Widening countries to develop gender equality measures**, for example through a dedicated gender-related call for proposals or by topping up Widening project budgets for targeted gender equality measures to be implemented within the project.

Still another set of GENDERACTION recommendations concerns the **business sector** (GENDERACTION, 2019a):

- The BES (Business Enterprise Sector), including Small and Medium Sized Enterprises and start-ups, should take their **corporate social responsibility** seriously, promote institutional changes for equality and diversity internally and address the gender dimension in the research and innovation solutions they develop
- **Public funding** allocated to the BES, including SMEs and start-ups, should be made contingent upon gender and diversity measures in place
- **Specific funding** should be allocated for tech companies and start-ups led by women and minorities at European Innovation Council and similar national programmes
- **Funding lines for innovation** at the EU and MS levels should, as a rule, address the gender and diversity dimensions in innovation, so that gender and other forms of bias are not built into new technologies and innovations
- The Commission should **promote the EU Prize for Women Innovators** more widely, to strengthen the brand and awareness in the EU. Members States should join the Commission and incentivise the unique role of women as social innovators and entrepreneurs and enhance their role in driving smart specialisation, by establishing funding schemes, prizes or other similar instruments.



## GENDERACTION recommendations for the development of Horizon Europe

As far as the implementation of Horizon Europe, the GENDERACTION project highlighted the following:

- The **gender dimension should be addressed as a requirement in terms of excellence and impact** in all relevant areas linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, requiring applicants to develop sex/gender analysis and include gender experts in the consortia for these topics. Project reporting should require that sex/ gender analysis should be specifically addressed. Monitoring of the inclusion of the gender dimension should be improved in Horizon Europe research projects
- Horizon Europe and national Research Funding Organizations, including the European Social Fund, should **open calls for future research to address the Sustainable Development Goals**, including the gender dimension across all the SDGs.

The last area of GENDERACTION recommendation includes **ethical concerns**, including gender, economic and ethnic/racial inequality and is connected to ERA Priority 6. The SWG GRI and the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation/SFIC produced an opinion on developing joint guidelines on a gender perspective for international cooperation in STI for Horizon Europe.

As a recommendation, the following is put forth (GENDERACTION, 2019a):

- The European Commission, Member States, Research Funding and Research Performing Organizations should pay attention to effectively addressing gender equality issues in their new research and innovation collaborations with third countries through **bi- and multi-lateral agreements** (including JPIs and ERANet Cofund schemes inter alia), with a view to foster empowerment, inclusion and solidarity across nations.

The recent GENDERACTION Briefing Paper on Structural Change, delivered in October 2019 (GENDERACTION, 2019d), containing recommendations about the structural change policy in the new Horizon Europe context. GENDERACTION main messages are summarised below, reaffirming some of the key points to introduce in the new framework programme:

- The EC and member states are strongly encouraged to maintain and further **reinforce the structural change approach** by increasing and/or introducing dedicated budget lines, introducing temporary special measures as well as new forms of disruptive measures (such as quotas, reverse mentoring, etc.)
- The uneven implementation across the EU member states must be addressed, including the lack of robust data, context-specific data and indicators to measure progress in the ERA
- Structural change must take an intersectional approach to gender equality to address race and ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, class and economic inequality, and disability
- Structural change must be applied to the Business Enterprise Sector.

Specific recommendations are issued for each message (see GENDERACTION, 2019c). Given the remit of CASPER, recommendations for the second message, concerning monitoring and evaluation challenges, are reported.

- The first recommendation addresses the **inadequacy of the headline indicator for ERA Priority 4** (women grade A). It is stated that it is not appropriate, sends the wrong message and stalls gender equality activities in inactive countries.



- The second recommendation urges the Commission to set up an **expert group** to develop recommendations on how to assess the implementation of structural change (prior to the next She Figures edition in 2021).
- The third recommendation is for **Member States**, which should take up the results of the expert group and **revise their monitoring** of priority 4 at national level.
- The fourth recommendation encourages the **Commission and Member States** to continue and improve **collection of sex-disaggregated and intersectional data**, supporting mutual learning and exchange.
- The fifth and final recommendation addresses all **RFOs** (including the EC), suggesting them to **extend the time span for monitoring and evaluation** activities of funded structural change projects, so as to be able to assess longer-term impact.

### 3.7. PRIORITY 5: Optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge

Priority 5 includes:

- Knowledge circulation (5a)
- Open access (5b)

As to sub-priority 5a, the ERA progress report 2018 (European Commission, 2019a) states that “knowledge transfer is a driver for modernising the economy and the implementation of policies and initiatives that support it have proven to be very beneficial. However, much closer cooperation between business and academia is needed across ERA countries. A combination of financial incentives and supportive regulatory frameworks are identified as essential factors to strengthen collaboration between industry and academia (...). At European level, FP7 and Horizon 2020 enhanced intersectoral research mobility and contributed towards commercialisation of research results which was otherwise not possible at national or regional level alone.”

#### ERA Priority 5 indicators

The headline indicator for sub-priority 5a (European Commission, 2019a), “is the share of product and/or process innovative firms cooperating with universities (as well as other higher education institutions), government, public or private research institutes, as a proxy for measuring the willingness of private firms to collaborate with public research and higher education institutions.”

Two complementary indicators are also highlighted (share of public research financed by the private sector; number of public–private co-publications per million population), while additional policy measures used as reference to assess progress concern: industry-academia interactions (KT centres, TTOs, incubators), and building collaboration through training and career development activities.

The headline indicator for sub-priority 5b (European Commission, 2019a), “is the share of a country’s scientific publications available in Open Access (OA).”

As complementary indicators, the following are used: RFOs (i.e. members of Science Europe or other important sources of national funding) providing funds to cover costs of OA publishing and their share of scientific publications that are available in OA; share of life sciences papers to which a country contributed and that have at least one open data set in Figshare. As additional policy highlights, the following are mentioned: financial issues and negotiation with publishers, OA awareness and HR resources, repositories and e-infrastructures, OA for data.





Results as concerns priority 5 are synthesised for the two sub-priorities. As for the knowledge circulation,

*“the situation with regard to policies that support knowledge circulation and open innovation still differs across Europe. In general, more initiatives and regulatory frameworks are being introduced across the ERA to enhance research and innovation cooperation between the public and private sectors. However, the transfer of research results to the market and closer collaboration between industry and academia still need to be promoted in many ERA countries, for example using a combination of financial incentives and supportive regulatory frameworks. Ongoing challenges also include the implementation of effective measures to evaluate and monitor research and innovation policies.”* (European Commission, 2019b)

As to the open access,

*“swift progress has been made on open access to publications in recent years, which includes the introduction of legal measures. However, obstacles remain, including the varying degrees of rule enforcement. There is also an assortment of national approaches to open access to research data, a domain in which progress has been much slower. A number of challenges remain, preventing a wholesale move to an open science environment.”* (ibid.)

### Gender Equality and relevance for CASPER

Priority 5 is presented with no connection to gender equality. **Data about academic/business programmes and relations, as well as those about publications in open access are not adopting a gender perspective.** The need to harmonise approaches, standards and legal frameworks is highlighted for this as for all ERA areas.

The GENDERACTION Briefing Paper Gender in Open Science & Open Innovation (OS&OI) addresses this gap. It states that

*“both gender and openness are included among the 6 priorities of the ERA Roadmap 2015-2020 (...). Additionally, Open access and Data management as well as Gender are cross-cutting issues in Horizon 2020, and also key elements of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), [as an antecedent] of the OS&OI movement. (...) However (...) most analysis and policy documents related to OS&OI adopt a gender-blind approach. In other words, gender equality and OS&OI have been treated so far as independent and unrelated topics, including the ERA Progress reports and Horizon 2020. The same gender-blind approach has been found in the scientific literature related to OS&OI as well as in the national ERA roadmaps analysed by GENDERACTION. This means that important goals of the ERA remain in fact disconnected and thus European research cannot benefit from positive synergies between the two priorities.”* (GENDERACTION, 2018)

Different **priorities for action** are then identified, addressing different stakeholders: mainly the European Commission, the EU Council, member states, RFOs, RPOs, innovative firms as well as researchers. They **concern five key areas** (see GENDERACTION, 2018 for more details):

- Gender **mainstreaming** and policy **synergies**
- Advancing **knowledge and awareness** of gender issues in OS&OI
- **Evaluation and assessment** practices in RFOs and RPOs
- **Publication practices** of researchers and RPOs
- **Innovative processes** and firms

Furthermore, as highlighted in the previous paragraph, the GENDERACTION Briefing Paper of April 2019 (GENDERACTION, 2019a), has vastly addressed issues of technological transfer and collaboration



with industry and businesses and provided insights on how to assess academia/industry cooperation from a gender perspective.

These hints are already aligned with policy trends from the Bologna Process/EHEA as reported in Chapter 2.4: **the framework is broader in that context as it includes, beside industry and the entrepreneurial university, the concept of civic engagement.** The latter opens up to opportunities for considering different societal groups (including women's/feminist organizations), and therefore **potentially expanding the definition of innovation to encompass social innovation**, as highlighted by gender in innovation studies (among others, Blake & Hanson, 2005; Nählinder, Tillmar & Wigren 2015).

Finally, the ERA focus on R&I which is particularly reflected in Priority 5, is of relevance for CASPER as it implies the possibility of enlarging the pool of potential beneficiaries of an EU level Certification Scheme on Gender Equality in Research to the business sector, and stakeholders from the social economy.

### 3.8. PRIORITY 6: International cooperation

According to the ERA progress report, priority 6

*“acknowledges the necessity to cooperate with non-EU countries on the major challenges such as energy, food security, climate change, ageing population, and health among others. The principle of the EU to be open to the world demonstrates a strong dedication to international cooperation. The EU recognises the benefits that it brings, such as scientific excellence, brain circulation and knowledge exchange, ability to tackle global challenges, creating a global pool of highly skilled researchers and science diplomacy.”* (European Commission, 2019a)

#### ERA priority 6 indicators

Since one of the main outcomes of strategies and actions designed to **promote the internationalisation of science and technology**, under Priority 6, is the increased propensity of ERA countries to jointly tackle research projects with third countries, the headline indicator for this area is international co-publications with non-ERA partners per 1,000 researchers in the public sector.

The three complementary indicators are: number of foreign doctorate students as a share of all doctorate students, knowledge-intensive services exports as percentage of total services exports, and exports of medium- and high-technology products as a share of total product exports. Additional policy highlights encompass: international cooperation landscapes, agreements between the EU and third countries, international cooperation activities between ERA countries and third countries, and researcher mobility.

The ERA progress report concludes, as far as progress for priority 6 is concerned, that

*“the extent of **international cooperation activities between ERA countries and third countries** seems to be on the increase. However, countries with more-developed research systems have more attractive collaboration opportunities. They are also better equipped to sustain and initiate new partnerships. (...) International mobility of researchers is actively promoted both at EU and national levels. At the EU level it was addressed through EURAXESS as well as promoted via the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme. At the national level, international cooperation is embedded in internationalisation strategies or national R&I strategies as well as ERA roadmaps. Qualitative data suggests that ERA countries, especially those with less-developed research systems, are more actively promoting incoming mobility due to the lack of human resources. There is a need to facilitate more active brain circulation, which involves both incoming and outgoing mobility of researchers on national levels through more diverse incentives.”* (European Commission, 2019a)





## Gender Equality and Relevance for CASPER

**Priority 6 seems connected to relevant topics for CASPER, in particular as concerns international researchers' mobility** (which is a strongly gender-sensitive topic, as highlighted for priority 3). In this case, the ERA report does not mention gender issues explicitly, and the indicators are not assessed from a gender perspective in the report. Nevertheless, **since 2016, SFIC and the SWG GRI agreed to set up an ad-hoc group for coordinating the joint work in fall 2016. Recommendations to integrate a gender perspective in Scientific Collaboration with Third Countries have been released**, as illustrated below. Furthermore, a H2020 CSA project dedicated to this specific topic has been approved in 2019 and it is expected to collaborate closely with both SWG GRI and SFIC. **This area is of importance to be considered in view of positioning CASPER Certification Schemes strategically within EU science diplomacy efforts.** The relevance is both in terms of stakeholders' engagement and in terms of specific indicators to be included as part of the assessment system.

Based on the results of a survey and report, joint recommendations from ERAC SFIC and SWG GRI have been drafted (see ERAC, 2019 for more details), addressing:

- **member states/associated countries**, to consider taking **additional measures** with a view to better integrating gender issues in international STI cooperation
- **the EC**, to start working on **common guidelines as best practices**, concrete examples and a potential common approach to support member states in operative terms, and also considering that a **European-level approach** would also produce greater commitment and drive from a political point of view
- **the EC** to consider taking up these issues (both gender equality and gender-related research in projects) within their further **international cooperation initiatives and dialogues** and in the context of their internationalisation strategy and activities within the next EU Framework Programme, including in evaluation of partnership projects
- to establish **gender expert groups**, networks and projects working in the area of gender in science, research and innovation as well as in international research cooperation to consider the survey results in their further work and to explore ways to raise awareness and improve uptake at all levels.



## 4. From Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe

In this chapter, we will have an overview of the **main aspects in which gender equality has been integrated into the Horizon 2020 programme**, and how recent developments seem to anticipate how it will be integrated into Horizon Europe.

### 4.1. Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 has been the Research and Innovation programme from 2014 to 2020; its interim evaluation describes it as “largely a success”:

- it has been attractive and relevant, and it has shown flexibility in responding to evolving political priorities (such as migration);
- it has offered unique collaboration and networking opportunities, with numerous academia-private sectors collaborations;
- its use of excellence as core underlying principle has ensured quality - with scientific publications of H2020 being cited at twice the world rate;
- it has shown European added value, enhancing EU's attractiveness as a place for research and innovation. Moreover, “the programme's additionality (i.e. not displacing national funding) is very strong”;
- finally, its leap in simplification has been a success, with reduced administrative costs and stakeholders' appreciation.

(European Commission, 2018b)

**Gender equality** has always been an important aspect of Horizon 2020.

It has been **included already in the programme's Framework Regulation through two articles** in particular. First of all, through **Article 14** gender is considered a cross-cutting issue, and it is listed among the other ones:

“Linkages and interfaces shall be implemented across and within the priorities of Horizon 2020. Particular attention shall be paid in this respect to: [...] responsible research and innovation including gender. (Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 establishing Horizon 2020, 2013)”.

Its presence in Article 14 ensured the mainstreaming of gender in the whole programme by integrating it in the concept of responsible research and innovation (RRI).

**Article 16** gives a more specific indication, with a provision exclusively on “Gender Equality”:

*“Horizon 2020 shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in bodies such as advisory groups and expert groups. The gender dimension shall be adequately integrated in research and innovation content in strategies, programmes and projects and followed through at all stages of the research cycle”.* (Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 establishing Horizon 2020, 2013)

This article, and the use of specific objectives related to gender equality, made so that the Commission would recognise gender equality in research and innovation as a “key element of Horizon 2020”.

**The objectives are reflecting the sub-areas within ERA Priority 4 on Gender in Research:**

- Gender balance in research teams - and equal opportunities in recruiting experts;
- Gender balance in decision making - gender balance in advisory groups (50 % target) and evaluation panels (40%);
- Integrating gender/sex analysis in R&I content - hence integrating the gender dimension in research content.



As of the latest data available, **the objectives have been partly met:**

- Gender balance in research teams: 42% Project Workforce, 28% women coordinators;
- Gender balance in decision making: 55% in Advisory groups and 41% in evaluation panels
- Integrating gender/sex analysis: in the 2020 work program, 119/337 (around 35%) topics for the call for proposals have an explicit gender dimension.<sup>5</sup>

(Directorate-General for Research and Innovation & European Commission, 2019)

In the Horizon 2020 manual for applicants, the section on gender equality clearly explains the necessity for both ensuring **gender equality in the Human Resources** of the applicant (the first two objectives) and in the content of the research, hence **Integrating Gender Analysis in Research** (the third objective, also called IGAR approach).

The position paper of the Advisory Group for Gender “For a better integration of the gender dimension in the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020” reiterates that “the gender dimension is an essential aspect of research excellence. It increases the societal relevance of the knowledge produced, as well as technologies and innovations. It is therefore essential to devote resources to these aspects of research.” (Horizon 2020 Advisory Group on Gender, 2016)

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*In H2020 the integration of a gender analysis in research has not been emphasised as a requirement for excellence as much as gender equality in Human Resources*

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The third objective, then, is an essential part of the excellence approach which the programme has adopted, as, on the opposite, “The quality and accountability of research is affected negatively when sex and gender is not taken into account” (Horizon 2020 Advisory Group on Gender, 2016).

Nonetheless, **the integration of a gender analysis in research has not been emphasised as a requirement for excellence**. While the level of attainment of the first two objectives is described as a ranking factor

“At the evaluation stage, gender balance in staff [and leadership] is one of the ranking factors that come into play to prioritise the proposals above the threshold with same scores. When it is used, evaluators need to compare the shares of men and women in the personnel named in the proposals and they will rank higher the proposal with the share closer to 50/50.”<sup>6</sup>

The presence of an IGAR approach is simply “invited”, and then assessed:

“When applying for a grant under Horizon 2020, you are invited to explore whether and how the gender dimension is relevant to your research. [...] The way sex and/or gender analysis is taken into account in your proposal will be assessed by the evaluators alongside the other relevant aspects of the proposal”.

(H2020 Online Manual, n.d.)

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<sup>5</sup> Against the 110/473 (around 23%) of the 2018-2019 work programme, which shows a positive trend in the integration of gender issues in Research and Innovation projects.

<sup>6</sup> GENDERACTION has been quite critical regarding the use of these indicators regarding gender balance: “the interim evaluation of gender in H2020 estimated that only 25% of funded projects were headed by women. The interim evaluation of H2020 did not provide a monitoring indicator on how often the gender balance in the consortium was applied as ranking factor for ex-aequo proposals but as it was not among the first ranking factors to be applied, and therefore low impact is expected.” (GENDERACTION, 2019).

Horizon 2020 also included gender training among the eligible costs of the projects, thus supporting the development and sharing of gender expertise in R&I. (European Commission, 2013)

As gender equality was integrated into the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) framework as a cross-cutting issue, it also became a specific strategic orientation inside the SwafS programme (Science with and for Society), which has a focus on the latter.

In the SwafS WP18-20, it is listed as the second among five strategic orientations: “Stepping up the support to Gender Equality in Research & Innovation policy”.

**Horizon 2020 stated specific targets, but it did not fully develop guidelines on how to reach them.**

Already in 2015, the Council Conclusions on advancing gender equality in ERA clearly stated that a key factor to integrate a gender perspective in research, and address gender imbalances, in research content, is through “cultural and institutional changes”. (Council of the European Union, 2015)

Horizon 2020 adopted the **institutional change approach** in particular through funding projects for the creation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs).

In line with the importance given to this approach<sup>7</sup>, Horizon 2020 could have been expected to allocate an important amount of resources in the instrument which was used in that regard: the provision of funding to research organisations for Gender Equality Plans under one of the areas of the SwafS programme. Instead, as the “Interim Evaluation on Gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in Horizon 2020” underlines, funding has been very low in absolute terms, even “[though] this is a very important link to the institutional approach developed for ERA” (de Cheveigné et al., 2017).

An evaluation of the SwafS projects on structural change was recently commissioned by the EC Finnish presidency and it is currently still undergoing: although the allocated funds represented a small share of the H2020 budget,

the impact of projects on institutional change was until now not thoroughly monitored to demonstrate sustainability over time of the processes and measures initiated through EU funds. At present, such a funding line is not confirmed to be reiterated within Horizon Europe.

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*Horizon 2020 adopted the **institutional change approach** in particular through funding projects for to the creation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). Nonetheless, funding has been low, and at present time such funding line is not confirmed to be reiterated within Horizon Europe.*

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## 4.2. Horizon Europe: positioning CASPER in a dynamic and still uncertain scenario

The Research and Innovation framework programme to follow Horizon 2020 is an ambitious 100 billion programme which is being negotiated at the time of writing and which is set to start in 2021: Horizon Europe (2021-2027).

The drafting of the first Horizon Europe Work Programme will be based on the previous consultations which have started already in Summer 2019: at first, there has been an early involvement and consultation with stakeholders, the Member States, and the public at large; the European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a provisional agreement on Horizon Europe in March and April 2019, and the European Parliament endorsed the provisional agreement on 17 April 2019.

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<sup>7</sup> Already in 2012 the European Commission published a report on the importance of the structural change approach in R&I, “Structural change in research institutions: enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation” (European Commission, 2012).



In autumn/winter 2019/20 there have been extensive negotiations and exchanges between the newly established Commission and the European Parliament, with on-going targeted consultations.

The picture below illustrates the **preliminary structure of Horizon Europe**:

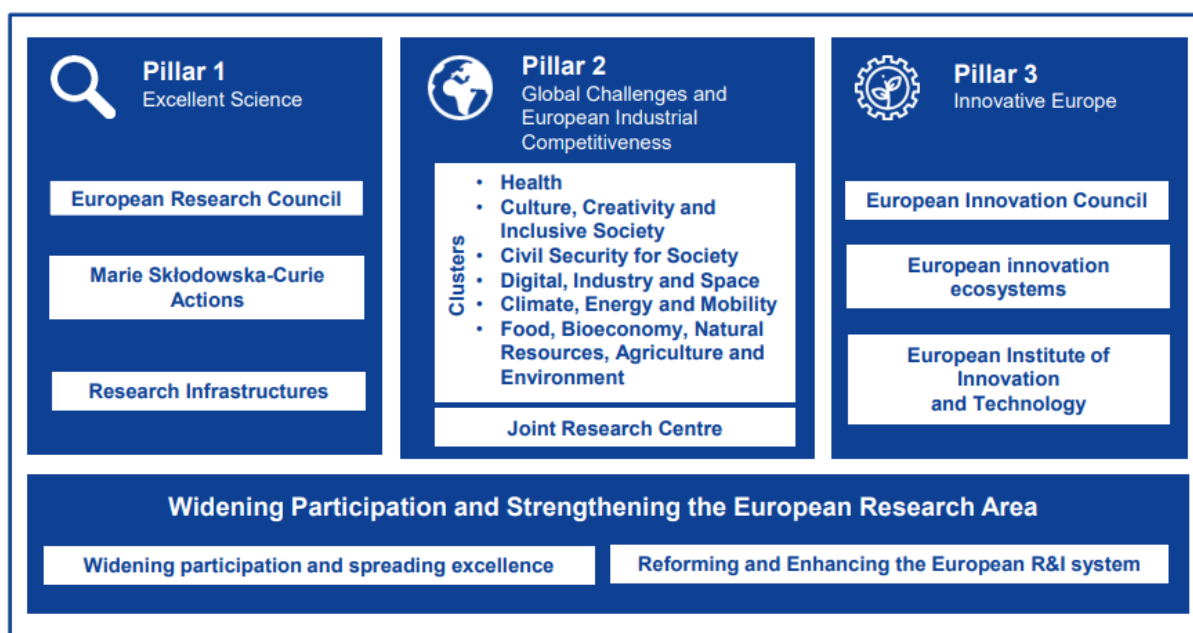


Figure 3 - Preliminary structure of Horizon Europe

## GENDER EQUALITY AND RELEVANCE FOR CASPER

In the Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe, the official document kickstarting the negotiations on the programme framework, we can find precise references to gender equality.

It is stated that **“the activities developed under the Programme should aim at eliminating gender inequalities and promoting equality** between women and men in research and innovation, in compliance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 8 of the TFEU” and that **“the gender dimension should be adequately integrated in research and innovation content** and followed through at all stages of the research cycle” (European Commission, 2018a).

The promotion of gender equality in research organisations continues to be accompanied by the integration of the gender dimension in the research content. Possibly, this will entail renewed efforts in promoting the IGAR approach, which sees its centrality confirmed also for the new R&I framework. In fact, Article 6.9 of the proposal further reinstates that “the Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content”.

It also adds that “Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in bodies such as expert groups” (European Commission, 2018a).

**Gender equality will probably be integrated as a cross-cutting issue in the Pillar 3, part 4, Part “Strengthening the European Research Area”:**

“While underpinning the entire Programme, this part will support activities that contribute to a more knowledge-based and innovative and gender-equal Europe, at the front edge of global competition, thereby optimising national strengths and potential across Europe in a well-performing European

Research Area (ERA), where knowledge and a highly skilled workforce circulate freely, where the outcomes of R&I are understood and trusted by informed citizens and benefit society as a whole, and where EU policy, notably R&I policy, is based on high quality scientific evidence. (European Commission, 2018a).

During a workshop on Gender Equality Plans, which took place in Brussels on the 4th of March 2020, the European Commission confirmed **the strong presence of gender equality as a subject of negotiations for the new programme**. (European Commission, 2020a)

The EC presentations at the workshop referred to “**Strengthened provisions for Gender Equality**”: In particular,

- Article 6a.5 (Principles of the Programme) of the Framework Regulation will set its legal basis “The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of equal opportunities for all, and the implementation of gender mainstreaming, and of the gender dimension in the research and innovation content and 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”.

It is very similar to the Proposal text, with the addition of an explicit reference to gender mainstreaming and the need to address the causes of gender imbalance.

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*The Commission seems to recognise, for Horizon Europe, the need for a structural change approach, and it is integrating an intersectional lens to their gender mainstreaming approach.*

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The latter is an important detail, as **it recognises the need for structural change** which impacts on the causes of imbalance, and not only on its effects. “Equal opportunities for all” is also a formula which leaves more space to the intersectional and diversity inclusive approach which the new Commission is adopting regarding Gender Equality (see the Union of Equality section of this report).

The presentation went on, quoting:

- Article 45 - “Monitoring and reporting of the Framework Regulation which shall include: information on gender participation in funded actions, evaluation panels, boards and advisory groups (...)” This article is in line with the H2020 first two objectives on gender balance in Human Resources;
- Line of activity under Pillar II, Cluster 2 [Culture, Creativity, and Inclusive Society] - which relates to “gender equality in all social, political, economic and cultural domains, **also addressing intersections between gender and other social categories**, such as disability, sexual orientation and ethnicity”.

Again, intersectionality is explicitly going to be integrated in the R&I programme as much as in the other EU programmes, following the new Gender Strategy guidelines.

The Commission also anticipated the formulation of two articles of the Specific Programme:

- Article 2, which sets **gender as a cross-cutting priority**:

“The Specific Programme has the following operational objectives: (ca) strengthening the gender dimension across the Programme”;

- And Article 4.3d, which sets **gender as a specific issue** on the Strategic Plan

“Specific issues, such as (...) gender equality, including the integration of gender dimension in the R&I content” (European Commission, 2020b)

This double approach of gender as both a cross-cutting issue and a specific objective mirrors the one in H2020: it will be left to see how gender equality will effectively be a cross-cutting priority, and the way in which such priority will be implemented.





A double approach remains essential - mainstreaming gender without giving specific objectives risks what Andrea Petó calls “de-gendering”: making it a cross-cutting issue, the policy “loses its location, and gender will be everywhere and nowhere” (Petó, 2017).

As stated in the new Gender Equality Strategy of the Commission, in Horizon Europe **there will be the “possibility to require a gender equality plan from applicants”** (European Commission, 2020b).

The specific way this would be made operational is still unknown in terms of which will be the scope and focus of Gender Equality Plans, if research proposals or applying Institutions/organizations. Clarity is also missing as far as what areas and dimensions the Plans will have to cover.

The present direction, especially if no dedicated funding to institutional change projects will be foreseen within Horizon Europe, seems to point to a **mainstreaming strategy strengthened by an incentive to Research Organizations to set up GEPs internally as a requirement to apply for and access grants.**

If this will be confirmed, it would open up to different possibilities, depending on how the requirement of setting up a Gender Equality Plan will be made operational within the Work Programme:

- it could instigate RPOs to opportunistic reactions and gender washing measures and formalistic interpretations, in the form of a ‘box ticking exercise’ and rushed approvals of Plans destined to stay on paper. Similar reactions were observed during FP5, when Gender Action Plans were asked for at the Project proposal levels<sup>8</sup> (EC, 2009).
- If embedded into the evaluation process, link to a score, and requested at the institutional level, it could trigger substantial efforts to achieve institutional change, if connected to specific mechanisms.

**The European Commission seems to be aware of the risks** related to the first scenario: during the above mentioned workshop on 4 March 2020, it was underlined that particular attention must be taken on two aspects: first, not to exclude countries and institutions at the outset of Horizon Europe because they do not have GEPs; and secondly, that the requirements of what a GEP entails must be clearly defined. We expect that if these mitigation strategies were implemented, the likelihood of this scenario occurring would drop dramatically. (European Commission, 2020a)

The relevance for CASPER would be clearer in the second, more positive, scenario: if the current policy direction is confirmed and an incentive mechanism is set up connected to Horizon Europe funding, demand from Universities and RPOs towards support services/tools might increase: as in the case of FP5 it was reported that lack of knowledge and support to set up a Gender Action Plan for a single research proposal was one of the obstacles. An EU certification programme jointly with gender trainings could become crucial mechanisms to prevent ‘bureaucratic’ responses to such incentives to set up gender equality measures at the institutional level.

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<sup>8</sup> Even if GAPs were recognized to be a useful awareness raising tool, the monitoring report assessed that the quality of GAPs was frequently low and they “tended to be regarded as a bureaucratic requirement rather than something of importance for the project. This perception was heightened by the fact that GAPs were not scored during evaluation”. (EC, 2009, p.24).



## The Helsinki Call for Action

20 years since the first European Commission Communication on Women in Science, on 23-24 October 2019, in Helsinki, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture<sup>9</sup> has led a conference on gender equality in research and innovation.

The conference was called [“Research and Innovation Excellence through gender equality: New pathways and challenges”](#) and it saw the participation of policy-makers, research funding institutions, innovation actors, NGOs, and other participants from the research and higher education community. The aim of the conference was *“to take stock of progress made, with a focus on institutional change, and discuss current challenges, with a view to reshaping our EU policy objectives on gender equality in R&I ahead of Horizon Europe and the future ERA.”* (Research and Innovation Excellence through gender equality, 2019)

The two-days event culminated in the publication of a co-created Helsinki Call for Action<sup>10</sup>, directed “to EU Member States and Associated Countries, the European Commission, research and innovation funding agencies, R&I-performing institutions, private companies and stakeholders” (New Pathways Conference, 2019). Although it is not an official EU document, this document provides a good overview in which direction the discussion about gender equality in R&I will be heading. Moreover, given the high visibility of the meeting and the presence of top policymakers, it is safe to assume that many of the messages have been received and integrated in the negotiations around the Horizon Europe programme.

Recommendations stemming from the call are in line with those from the ERAC SWG (see chapter 3). They also confirm policy trends pointing at mainstreaming a gender approach into Open Science and Open Innovation, and the importance that *“gender equality must take an intersectional approach”*.

The Gender Equality strategy of the Commission which followed this call seem to have taken up this suggestion, finally incorporating intersectionality in its gender equality approach<sup>11</sup>.

Another important issue raised by the Call for action is the need to address gender-based violence and harassment in research, innovation and higher education.

→ This is an aspect which is not often considered in certifications and awards schemes. CASPER should definitely include indicators regarding the presence and quality of policies and instruments to combat harassment and gender-based violence.

The call points also at the need to set up financial incentives through a pro-active role from Research and innovation funding agencies which should take more responsibility for gender equality in R&I actions which should incorporate gender equality in all research funding mechanisms.

→ CASPER Certification scheme has already planned to engage RFOs among stakeholders with whom the feasibility of different scenarios will be co-created to design mechanisms to link the Certification/awarding process to access to research funds.

<sup>9</sup> The conference was organised thanks to the support from the European Commission through Horizon 2020 under grant agreement No 859383 – NEWPATHWAYS.

<sup>10</sup> The complete text of the Call for Action can be found at this address <https://www.lyyti.fi/p/NEWPATHWAYS/en/outcomes>.

<sup>11</sup> The Commission’s strategy also takes up on the specific attention given to the development of AI, by stating that “Horizon Europe [...] will also provide insights and solutions on addressing potential gender biases in AI”. (European Commission, 2020)





## 5. From the “Strategic Engagement” to “A Union of Equality”

As this report wants to recognise the ways in which gender equality is being integrated into the Education, Research and Innovation European policy frameworks, it is interesting also to see how Research, Education and Innovation are integrated into the main policy documents regarding the Gender Equality strategy of the European Union.

We will start with an overview of the Strategic Engagement, which has been the reference document for gender equality for the 2016-2019 period, before turning to the current Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

### 5.1. The Strategic Engagement 2016-2019

The Strategic Engagement has been criticised for “not being a real gender equality plan”, but a simple engagement (Pető, 2017). The Strategic Engagement was rather “a reference framework for increased effort at all levels” of EU governance to continue their work on **the five key areas for action** which had been identified in the Commission’s 2010-2015 strategy for equality between women and men:

- equal economic independence for women and men;
- equal pay for work of equal value;
- equality in decision making;
- dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence; and
- promoting gender equality beyond the EU.

The Strategic Engagement, while it did not present a new plan, rather set specific key actions related to the already present key areas for the 2016-2019 period. It is interesting to notice that in general there is **little reference to diversity, while the focus is specifically on gender equality**. Intersectionality is addressed as a principle, even though the term was not used: “Particular attention will be paid to the specific needs of groups facing multiple disadvantages, e.g. single parents and older, migrant, Roma and disabled women”.

Diversity is only referenced regarding the integration of a gender equality perspective into all human resource practices and policies in the European Commission (Annex 3). In this case, there is a reference for a need of at least 40% women’s representation, but also to the attraction and retainment of staff with disabilities, and the need for creating an “inclusive” working-environment.

It is interesting to notice that there is a reference to Diversity Charters platforms, but it is exclusively in the context of “further supporting companies in their efforts to increase female labour-market participation”. We will see that these instruments will also be referenced to in the Union for Equality, but with increased importance - and a more encompassing understanding of the “diversity” aspect of such Charters.

#### Research and Innovation related issues

Research in the Strategic Engagement has been referenced to in **two main key areas**:

1) economic independence of women and men, and 2) balance in decision making. **“Equal economic independence”** in particular plays as the framework for the explicit need for gender equality in research as it is mentioned that “Female entrepreneurship, gender equality in research and the labour-market integration of migrant women are further components of equal economic independence”.



The “promotion of female entrepreneurship and gender equality in research” was considered as a sub-objective of the major Strategic Engagement goal to “increase female labour-market participation and equality in the economic independence of women and men”.

The specific action to reach such a sub-objective was to “**continue efforts [to] promote institutional change** in research organisations to remove barriers to gender equality and engage all such organisations to implement gender equality plans”, with the related responsibility being assigned to the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation for the years 2016/17.

It is clear that the Strategic Engagement was aligned with stating the necessity, already set by ERA, for an institutional change approach to promoting gender

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*The Strategic Engagement was aligned with stating the necessity, already set by ERA, for an institutional change approach to promoting gender equality in research organisations -*

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equality in research organisations - and it underlined the responsibility of the DG Research to continuing its work which, as we have seen, was already integrated into the H2020 framework. Furthermore, the Strategic Engagement added an indicator to the Action, which was the proportion of research-performing organisations that have adopted gender equality plans with a 2014 baseline of 34% (She Figures 2015). By the 2018 She Figures report, the percentage had risen to 55,9% (She Figures 2018).

Also, under 3) **Promoting equality in decision making** there was a specific objective related to research: to “improve data collection and gender balance in decision-making positions in research organisations”. The specific action was, again, assigned to the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, namely to “Provide guidance to Member States on a common approach to implementing quantitative targets for decision-making positions in research” by 2016. In this case, too, the DG was already implementing such action, especially under the Horizon 2020 programme.

## 5.2. A Union of Equality. Gender Equality strategy 2020-2025

On the 5th of March 2020, the new Gender Equality strategy for 2020-2025 was published.

**The new Commission has shown a strong commitment to the mainstreaming** of equality, and, in particular, **of gender equality**, by its appointment of the first Commissioner for Equality and the creation of the Task Force for Equality<sup>12</sup>.

The latter will “ensure the implementation of equality mainstreaming, including gender equality, at operational and technical level” (European Commission, 2020b).

In its Gender Equality Strategy, the Commission reiterates that it will integrate a gender perspective in all major initiatives during the current mandate. The Gender Equality Strategy of this Commission has a strong focus on diversity, and in its introduction, it states that “in business, politics and society as a whole, we can only reach our full potential if we use all of our talent and diversity”.

The new Strategy is articulated around **6 pillars/goals** as follows:

1. Being free from violence and stereotypes
2. Thriving in a gender-equal economy
3. Leading equally throughout society
4. Gender mainstreaming and an intersectional perspective in EU policies

<sup>12</sup> The Task Force is composed of representatives of each Commission service and of the European External Action Service; it will facilitate the mainstreaming of equality relating to different grounds of discrimination: sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.



5. Funding actions to make progress in gender equality in the EU
6. Addressing gender equality and women's empowerment across the world

In this new policy document, though, the diversity rhetoric coexists with an intersectionality framework<sup>13</sup>. The Strategy gives prominence to gender and points at the heterogeneity and differences featuring women and men, which cannot be intended as monolithic groups, coherently with an **intersectionality approach adopted as “a cross-cutting principle”**

In facts, as it is reported:

*“The expression ‘in all their diversity’ is used in this strategy to express that, where women or men are mentioned, these are heterogeneous categories including in relation to their sex, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. It affirms the commitment to leave no one behind and achieve a gender-equal Europe for everyone, regardless of their sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.” (European Commission, 2020b)*

This LGBTI+ inclusive, intersectional, diversity-oriented definition is a welcome novelty, and it is a strong signal of the new approach to gender equality which has been adopted by the Commission, which overcomes, at least by words, the binarism which has often characterised gender equality policies.

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*In the new Gender Equality Strategy, intersectionality is adopted as a cross-cutting principle; the strategy also seems to overcome the binarism which has often characterised gender equality policies with LGBTI+ inclusive language*

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As we will highlight below, it is also applied to the part of the Strategy on Research and Innovation policies. It will be supported by the creation of a Task Force for Equality composed of representatives of all Commission services and of the European External Action Service to “ensure the implementation of equality mainstreaming, including gender equality, at operational and technical level”.

## Research, Innovation and education related issues

**Research and Innovation related issues are transversal to the pillars and mostly touched upon in pillar 1, 2, 3 and 5.** The strategy anticipates some gender-related aspects which the new R&I programme Horizon Europe might have in pillar 5: given the still ongoing process as far as the definition of Work Programmes is concerned, the Strategy frames all statements referred to Research and Innovation as ‘possibilities’. Still, it somehow reinforces the already highlighted predictions of a strong integration of gender equality issues in the programme.

It is stated that in Horizon Europe new measures to strengthen gender equality will be foreseen, “such as the possibility to require a gender equality plan from applicants and an initiative to increase the number of women-led technology start-ups.”

It is also anticipated that **funding will be made available for “gender and *intersectional* research”.**

The intersectional approach really seems to have gained centrality also as far as Research and Innovation are concerned. It is interesting to notice how gender research and intersectional research are referenced to as separate, so that it is to wonder whether this will entail that there will be different lines of actions, one related to gender specifically, and one which will expect more of an intersectional approach, or if intersectionality will become an aspect of “gender research”.

<sup>13</sup> When referring to improving gender balance in decision making at all levels (companies, public bodies, NGOs) and within pillar 6, a diversity rhetoric is used in the document and the platform to be exploited to promote exchange of good practices in this area is the EU [Platform of Diversity Charters](#).



Research on gender and Artificial Intelligence is also mentioned as an area to be funded, as gender-blind AI technologies are identified as potentially strengthening gender stereotypes (pillar 1) and targeted measures promoting the participation of women in innovation are announced, which are to be developed under the Horizon Europe European Innovation Council.

In relation to Education, the strategy makes use of the diversity concept, resonating with the language in use within the Bologna Process and EHEA documents (See chapter 2) stating “an Inclusion and Diversity Strategy for the future Erasmus+ programme will provide guidance on how the programme can help address gender inequalities in all education and training, youth and sport sectors”.

Reference to a **prominent role to be given to gender equality in the Future European Education Area** is also made as in the Commission’s forthcoming communication on the European Education Area, “gender equality will be put forward as one of the key elements.”

## RELEVANCE FOR CASPER

We would draw two main conclusions as far as the relevance for the CASPER Project is concerned.

The new Strategy confirms the trend towards **greater integration between different policy areas** (Research, Innovation, Education) already highlighted in chapters 2 and 3, which is definitely something to impact on the way CASPER will select stakeholders to be engaged, assessment of existing certification schemes and needs from stakeholders, as well as the co-creation and piloting of scenarios.

Given the fact that the European Commission committed to **the integration of a gender perspective in all its major initiatives, and to intersectionality as a cross-cutting principle**, this clearly points to the need for CASPER to adopt an intersectional approach; in the current scenario, the proposal for an European gender equality certification - in Research & Innovation as in any other area - which does not meet these criteria would most probably be considered obsolete, given the new priorities of the Commission.



## 6. Preliminary mapping of Certification and Awarding schemes

This final part of the report is dedicated to the preliminary mapping of existing Certification and Award schemes (hereafter: CAS) which are relevant to CASPER.

The term CAS is particularly useful, as the research has not provided a clear-cut, common understanding of the difference between Award and Certification: possibly, it has been up to the respective institutions to decide which terminology was the most appropriate. In addition, other terminology can be used, such as “standard” and “label”, and are included in the umbrella term “CAS”.

The selection criteria for choosing which CAS to map and review were:

- **Representativity:** for this preliminary report, CAS which were too similar to one another were not mapped; instead, priority was given to the representation of diverse approaches to certification and awarding methods.
- **Focus on Gender Equality or Diversity & Inclusion:** CAS which specifically focused on these aspects were of course prioritised, as they are the most relevant to CASPER. In some cases, also CAS which only incidentally consider gender were mapped, because of the interesting aspects of their methodology.

As the CASPER project could be summarised as a feasibility study for a Certification or Award in Research and Higher Education, CAS which relate to that area were prioritised; nonetheless, CAS more strictly related to business were also considered, as their methodology and use of indicators may give useful inputs for the CASPER definition of potential certification scenarios.

The CAS which are mapped in this deliverable are:

- HRS4R
- Athena SWAN
- Catalyst Award
- Disability Standard
- GEEIS-Diversity
- Juno (2007)
- Label Egalité professionnelle + Diversité
- EDGE
- Minerva Award
- Norwegian GE Award
- Race Equality Chart
- Stonewall global WEI
- Total E-Quality
- Winning Women GE certification
- X-Aequo

It is important to keep in mind that this is only a preliminary mapping, and the content of the following factsheets is necessarily limited. In June 2020, a complete State of the art Report “State of the Art Analysis: mapping the awarding certification landscape in HE/Research” will be published (D3.3).

The research for the State of the Art report is currently undergoing, and it is mobilizing a network of international researchers who will cover the EU 28 States, plus Australia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and the USA via a systematic screening and mapping in national languages.

This ongoing part of the research will inform the assessment and the creation of scenarios through the provision of updated, official and relevant information regarding the national legal frameworks around Higher Education and Research.



The analysis of the national frameworks and a more insightful and detailed analysis of the existing certifications at a national level will inform a better understanding of whether and how CAS are integrated in national HE and Research Policies, particularly into national accreditation mechanisms and national research funding policies. This will ensure that no relevant information is overlooked in the creation of potential scenarios.

## 6.1. Methodology

The preliminary mapping and analysis of the CAS was carried out by the CASPER partners through **online desk-based research with the exception of HRS4R** where additional information has been collected by interviewing stakeholders from GENDERACTION and FECYT<sup>14</sup>. The analytical template for the desk research was structured in a way to answer in detail a series of questions, which can be summarised in the macro areas of “What and why” “For whom” “By whom” and “How”.

The factsheets resulting from this analysis are standardised. In many cases, the information reported is a direct quotation of the information that available in the awarding institutions sites, while in other cases the information has been summarised.

In some cases, some sections of the report are missing –especially the “Gender, diversity and Excellence” section. This is due to the fact that no specific information regarding that section was found on the websites of the CAS which were being reviewed. The research questions which guided the reporting on this area were: whether the European policies or frameworks analysed in this report were explicitly referenced; how were excellence and quality in research defined; and whether the latter were explicitly linked with gender equality and diversity.

The answer to these questions was rarely available: of course, they were specific for CAS which at least included Research and Higher Education institutions, but even in those cases, the interlinkage between quality and excellence and gender equality and diversity were rarely spelled out. The section of the factsheet which relates to these questions has been omitted where the answer was not available and no intersectional approach has been detected – otherwise, a short section on the intersectional approach of the CAS has been included.

Another research question was on which indicators were used for internal quality control of the certification or award, and in what way the certifying institution would ensure the good functioning of the certification system itself, specifically by using which indicators.

The answer to this question was not available in any of the mapped CAS through a simple online desk-research. This information will be further searched for in T3.2 by national researchers.

## 6.2. Preliminary overview

### Similarities

A complete analysis and comparison of the schemes which were mapped is outside the scope of this document, which rather works as preliminary overview of the main typologies of CAS. Moreover, as stated above, the CAS were selected with a criterion of representativity, which led to choosing CAS which are as diverse as possible. Nonetheless, there are a few elements of similarity which can already be summarised.

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<sup>14</sup> On line non structured interviews have been held with Marcela Linkova (ISAS, GENDER ACTION coordinator, CASPER’s partner) and Izaskun Lacunza (FECYT).





The summary will follow the structure of the analytical template that has been used to retrieve information, creating four macro categories: Scope and Values/Frameworks; Target beneficiaries; CAS Owners; Process. The latter is the most interesting for the future developments of the CASPER project.

- **Scope and Values/frameworks**

Given the scope of the research, most of the CAS which were selected were focusing on gender equality or on other axes of discrimination, often through a more general diversity & inclusion approach. Excellence tends to be often rhetorically referenced to, but without clear-cut definitions: the understanding of excellence for the various CAS has to be deduced from the use of indicators and criteria for assessment. The link between gender equality, diversity, and excellence, of which this report has shown the ubiquitous presence in European discourse around research excellence, is generally not as explicit as it was initially expected. Gender Equality tends to be associated with excellence specifically in Human Resources Management in the business sector. Equal opportunities, (gender-)balance, and (non-)discrimination are also terms which were among the most often utilised.

- **Target beneficiaries**

Greater attention has been given to CAS which focus, or at least include, HEIs and RPOs – nonetheless, quantitatively, most of the CAS which specifically address gender equality had a more general focus on the business area. Human Resources in the business area is ahead by a few years of the current developments in Research and Education, as the first awards and recognitions were created as early as 1987 (Catalyst Award, which is US-based).

- **CAS owners**

Most CAS are awarded by private bodies, especially non-profits and charities. In some cases, such as for the French Labels, the ownership is by a public body – nonetheless, the assessment is still carried out by private and specialised organisations.

- **Process**

The CAS, as diverse as they were for target, focus and awarding institutions, sometimes have common assessment strategies. The element which is most often identified, however declined in different and customised approaches, is the presence of a self-assessment by the applicants, based on the criteria set by the awarding institution. Another important recurring element is the evaluation of the application through auditing, either by peer-review (both elements are also present in HRS4R), or by a panel of external experts. In many cases the auditing is on-site, but also desktop-based auditing seems to be a viable strategy to review the application cutting down on implementation costs. Almost every CAS provides extra support to the applicants, often through the sharing of best practices, but in most cases by providing further assistance and information to obtain the CAS itself.

### **What is missing – Opportunities for CASPER**

It was not possible for this preliminary mapping to deepen the research to more than a superficial level, which necessarily limits the quantity of information which it was possible to retrieve. At a first level of analysis, though, there are a few aspects which seem to be “missing” in most certification and awards schemes which were reviewed. These aspects are

- Most CAS do not have an explicitly intersectional approach;
- Most CAS which are open to HEIs do not have indicators on the diversity of the student population;
- Most CAS which are open to RPOs and HEIs do not have indicators on the integration of gender analysis in research or in teaching content;





- None of the awarding institution websites had immediately accessible and transparent information regarding the internal processes and mechanisms to ensure the quality of the CAS, as for example the complaints and appeal procedure.

These aspects should be taken into careful consideration for CASPER, not only to enhance the overall quality of the certification scenarios to propose, but to ensure a competitive advantage towards the existing CAS which focus on research and Higher Education Institutions.

### 6.3. Factsheets

In the following pages, the factsheets are listed in alphabetical order. An entire subchapter is dedicated to the HRS4R, whereas the other schemes which were analysed only have a dedicated factsheet.

Athena SWAN has received particular attention given its salience in the CAS ecosystem, hence the length of the factsheet. The other factsheets are generally shorter to provide an immediate overview of the CAS, with a focus on their business models, certification processes, and use of indicators. When and if an intersectional approach is present, it is underlined. This overview has been thought out to be generally informative, but also specifically useful to inform the development of CASPER scenarios through the study of existing certification and award systems.

### 6.4. The HRS4R and the Charter and Code

#### The Human Resources strategy for researchers: past and future developments

This section is dedicated to the Human Resources Strategy for researchers (hereafter, HRS4R or “Strategy”). This is a hybrid chapter, as it will both address the HRS4R as an existing framework and as a scheme which is worth extra attention compared to the other schemes that are mapped in the next section of the report. The HRS4R and the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, on which the HRS4R relies, have a central role in European HR management in research, and thus deserve particular attention.

This is the **only certification scheme which has been created, coordinated and managed by the European Commission** (DG RTD), with the support of the EURAXESS network on research mobility for dissemination and outreach. At the time of writing, 512 European organizations have received the HR Excellence in Research award.

As far as policy development is concerned, HRS4R is a domain of work for the ERAC Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility.

A summary sheet of the information gathered about the award is provided at the end of this chapter. The HRS4R is recognition that the European Commission confers to research institutions after these institutions have officially endorsed the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, self-assessed and proposed an Action Plan to better adhere to the Charter and Code principles. To maintain the Award, and the possibility to use its logo, the organisations must then demonstrate implementation of the Action Plan, which is assessed by external experts.

A sense of the **embeddedness of the Strategy to the European Research and Innovation policy** and funding frameworks is given by the presence of **Article 32 in the Grant Agreements** for the projects proposed within Horizon 2020.

Article 32 states that there is an “obligation to take measures to implement the European Charter for



Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers [...]. If a beneficiary breaches its obligations under this Article, the [Commission][Agency] may apply any of the measures described in chapter 6”, which is related to the rejection of costs, sanctions, and termination of the project.

In the past, the HRS4R has seen a major change in its structure: the **new “strengthened” HRS4R**, in fact, is not only more specific in its expectations of actionability of the Plans, but gives particular attention towards the recruitment process through the integration of a mandatory OTM-R (Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers) policy assessment. The actionability of the plans implies a more specific use of timelines and indicators and wider involvement of stakeholders in their planning.

### Gender equality issues

The Charter and Code already have gender-related principles embedded, namely:

- **non-discrimination**, which also includes gender as a ground for discrimination, but does not apply an intersectional approach;
- **working conditions**, which call for adequate work-life balance for women and men; and finally
- **gender-balance**, which is limited by the specification that it should be achieved "without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence criteria".

This last formulation is particularly significant regarding the **need to review the Charter and Code through updated gender lens**. Updated, as the ERA policy frameworks have long overcome the bias according to which achieving gender balance would happen at the detriment of quality, and on the contrary it rather recognises it as a booster for quality and excellence in research.

The recent addition of the OTM-R recommendations, which now make an integral part of the application “packet”, is an interesting aspect to consider. Indeed, it means that the HRS4R has space for further developments.

The **H2020 GEARING-Roles project** consortium includes FECYT as a partner, the Spanish Research Council Euraxess contact point in Spain. In this project, they **explore the extent to which HRS4R could be further improved as far as gender equality provisions are concerned**, specifically by assessing the OTM-R checklist itself. Instead of proposing a new checklist of gender-sensitive principles and indicators for recruitment, it has tried to integrate gender sensitivity directly in the already existing OTM-R principles and indicators.

The project has recently published a report on its first results regarding the “OTM-R European Commission Guidelines Under The Gender Equality Lenses” (GEARING-Roles, 2020). During a series of workshops, gender equality experts “analysed the current OTM-R checklist and discussed actions which could lead to strengthening the gender equality measures of the recruitment process”. The results were a series of principles, sub-principles, and indicators which could be integrated into the checklist. The project will eventually make a recommendation to the European Commission regarding the integration of its results in the OTM-R toolkit.

Strengthening the whole HRS4R through more gender and diversity sensitivity may also come through a similar exercise, which in this case would be applied to the Charter and Code themselves - the GEARING-Roles project considers it as a potential next step.

In the last period, there have been ongoing **conversations between the ERA Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility (led by a FECYT representative) and the SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation**, which share a common worry as to how the two areas, as close as they are,



have been disconnected so far - the “silos” approach being particularly counterproductive in this context, where powerful synergies could be started.

**The two Working Groups are considering, together with the Working Group on Open Science and Innovation, forming a task force exactly for the purpose of preparing a revision of the Charter and Code from a gender perspective.** The task force met for the first time on the 24th of March 2020 to discuss the scope and timeline of their work. The task force is expected to produce a public deliverable by the end of this year, with a recommendation for the Commission.

A review of the Charter and Code through a gender lens could be an important element to give a major shift in how Human Resources and Gender Equality issues are addressed in the European Research Area.

The possibility of a review of the Charter and Code is quite high on the agenda: if it were to be adopted by the Commission and Member States, this would open a new possibility for the CASPER project.

### Relevance for CASPER

In this context of change and revision of the HRS4R founding documents, an interesting scenario for a European level certification on gender equality and diversity may be that of being **embedded in the HRS4R process**.

This scenario would imply that there would not, in fact, be a different certification exclusively on gender equality, but rather a **strengthened, gender-sensitive HRS4R**. A further analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of such an option should definitely be included in the next steps of the CASPER project, given that there already are discussions among relevant stakeholders which seem to lean towards the gender-sensitive strengthening of the European award system - or at least, of its founding documents, which would necessarily lead to the need to update the system.

In mid-June, the Commission is expected to publish a Communication on the future of ERA: in case the Commission openly references the update of the Charter and Code, this would open a **window of opportunity for CASPER** to give fundamental strategic directions in the formulation of the possible implementation process of such an update.

This could be interesting to explore both as **advantages and disadvantages** are concerned: An integration would make it possible to rely on an already existing system which is widely known and has a strong communication structure<sup>15</sup> with the certification process to be managed directly by the European Commission.

Still, several critical aspects would need to be tackled such as, for example: the needed support to RPOs to deal also with gender equality policies, as well as training of experts/reviewers; the missing coverage of priority areas for gender equality in research which are difficult to be subsumed within HR issues, last but not least, the integration of gender dimension in research content, or in Teaching and other broader service areas within Research and HEI Organizations.

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<sup>15</sup> The European Commission uses the EURAXESS platform to manage the promotion and communications of the HRS4R award. While the HRS4R is managed directly by the European Commission, it is EURAXESS with its national offices which manage the promotion of the Strategy. While the use of national offices may bring to a diversified level of awareness and participation among States, it is also an established system which may be interesting to take into consideration.



<b>HRS4R Award</b>		2008
<b>Award</b> <a href="https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/node/5765/#hrs4r-tabs-tab-2-name">https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/node/5765/#hrs4r-tabs-tab-2-name</a>	<b>Regional - European</b> <a href="https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/contact-us">https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/contact-us</a>	
<b>Awarding body:</b>	<b>European Commission</b>	
<b>Target Audience:</b>	<b>Research Organisations</b>	

**Overall description:**

The HRS4R award, or "HR Excellence in Research" award, is a recognition which the European Commission confers to research institutions in the framework of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers. In order to achieve it, institutions must, first, officially endorse the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers of the European Commission.

Applicant institutions must then complete the application with three documents: a self-assessment regarding the areas of concern of the Charter and Code (gap-analysis); an Action Plan to fill the gaps; and an OTM-R document which assesses the recruitment policy in detail. If the review of such documents by the Commission is successful, then the applicant will receive the Award and the possibility to use its logo.

After that, the implementation phase (lasting 2 years) of the Action Plan is also reviewed and supported by the Commission through feedback; finally, during the renewal phase (every three years) the Commission assesses the applicants' developments and decides whether the applicant will keep their award or not. As of lately, the process has been digitalised, and the applicants need to sign up to the Euraxess site and manage the administrative aspects of the process online.

**Eligibility and requirements:****Eligibility**

All Research Performing organisations are eligible.

**Requirements**

First of all, creation of a profile on the Euraxess site. A first step consists in submitting an official letter endorsing the Charter & Code and committing to implement the HRS4R. In a second step, the European Commission will check the endorsement letter and send back the confirmation, or rejection, within 10 working days.

**Business model:**

The registration to Euraxess and the application to the process is free; the applicants have to cover all expenses related to the self-assessment and to the implementation of the action plan. The initial review and the subsequent auditing by third-party experts (peer-review) are on a volunteer basis. The peer reviewers have their costs covered in case of on-site visits (as it is the case for the second review period).

**Certification process, assessment, and support:**

The Commission provides all the necessary templates to fill out, and they are freely available on the site. They first encourage the applicant to send the letter of endorsement for the Charter and Code; then, once its letter has been accepted, the applicant should download, edit and fill out, and upload on Euraxess the relevant documents for its application (the gap analysis, the OTM-R report, and the Action Plan). The Commission will review the application and give the possibility to use the logo on the applicant's site and communications. This initial assessment is after 12 months from Application; an interim assessment is then done 24 months after the awarding, with peer-reviewers assessing whether and how the institution has followed its action plan: they also give recommendations, and the applicant does not risk to lose the award at this stage. After this assessment stage, the renewal stage is cyclical, with a review every 36 months by peer-reviewers. Every second renewal review is made on site.

There is plenty of support for the applicants: for example, an E-learning module has been developed to instruct the applicants on how to create their profile on Euraxess, how to apply, etc. Award winners also are expected to have an accessible page on their sites in which they publish their steps for HRS4R (i.e. Their Action Plan). As the award winners' sites are listed in the Euraxess site, this works as a sharing of best practices, too. Finally, in case the first phase of the application is unsuccessful, the Commission provides recommendations on how to improve the application, update it, and resubmit it for a new assessment.

**Criteria and Indicators used:**

The criteria for assessment are directly related to the Charter and Code: in facts, in writing the action plan the applicant must assess its strengths and weaknesses regarding four areas, which are the thematic heading of the Charter and Code. These areas are Ethical and professional aspects Recruitment and selection, Working conditions, and Training and development.

The specific indicators for the assessment are available in the templates provided to the applicants and to the reviewers, which are public (<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/useful-information/policy-library#document-collapsible-research-careers-strengthened-hrs4r-process>)

Here are the indicators used for the first quality assessment, which "evaluates the level of ambition and the quality of progress intended by the organisation".

The following questions are to be answered by the assessor through "Yes", "No", and "Partly":

- Is the organisational information provided sufficient to understand the context in which the HR Strategy is designed?
- Is the Action Plan in line with the Gap Analysis?
- Have a steering committee and working group been involved in the implementation of the HRS4R-process?
- Has the research community been sufficiently involved in the process, with a representation of all levels of a research career?
- Are the relevant management departments sufficiently involved in the process so as to guarantee a solid implementation?
- Have adequate targets and indicators been provided in order to demonstrate when/how an action will be/has been completed?
- Is the organisation establishing an OTM-R policy?
- Are the goals sufficiently ambitious considering the context of the organization?

**Gender, diversity, and excellence:**

There is no explicit **intersectional approach**: the Charter references to both gender equality and non-discrimination on various grounds, but not to the intersection of multiple axes of discrimination.

**Definition of quality/excellence**

In the Charter there is a reference to "high quality researchers" to be recruited and retained in "environments conducive to effective performance and productivity"; otherwise, in the HRS4R awarding system quality is often referred to, but not specifically related to research; rather, the attention is on the quality of the actions proposed and undertaken by the applicants to fill the gaps of the gap analysis.

**Link between GE, D&I, and excellence**

In the Charter there is a link between the shortage of researchers, which is a "threat to EU's innovative strength, knowledge capacity and productivity growth" and the need to include more women in research. Non-discrimination, life-work balance, and gender equality are referred to without giving explanations directly linked with excellence. Under the Gender Equality principle, it is stated that gender balance should be achieved "without, however, taking precedence over quality and competence criteria".



<h1>Athena SWAN</h1> <p><b>Award</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-SWAN/">https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-SWAN/</a></p> <p><b>Awarding body:</b> <b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p><b>2005</b></p> <p><b>National // UK + Ireland, Australia, Canada (own versions)</b></p> <p><b>Advance HE, First floor, Napier House, 24 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6AZ</b></p> <p><b>Advance HE (formerly Equality Challenge Unit)</b> <b>Universities, Departments, RPOs / Research Institutes</b></p>
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### Overall description:

The Athena SWAN Charter was established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research. The Athena SWAN Charter has been managed by the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) since 2005. Following the 2017 Bell Review of higher education sector agencies, ECU was merged in 2018 into a single body with the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) called Advance HE.

In May 2015 the charter was expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students. The charter now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.

Advance HE's Athena SWAN Charter covers women (and men where appropriate) in academic roles in STEMM and AHSSBL, professional and support staff, and trans staff and students, in relation to representation, working environment for all staff, journey through career milestones, and progression of students in academia.

There are three levels of award available for institutions and individual departments. Members are encouraged to work through the levels from Bronze, to Silver and Gold. Bronze institution awards recognise that the institution has a solid foundation for eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all staff.

Silver institution awards recognise a significant record of activity and achievement by the institution in promoting gender equality and in addressing challenges across different disciplines. Applications should focus on what has improved since the Bronze institutional award application, how the institution has built on the achievements of award-winning departments, and what the institution is doing to help individual departments to apply for Athena SWAN awards.

Gold institutions should be beacons of achievement in gender equality and should champion and promote good practice in the wider community. A Gold institution award recognises a significant and sustained record of activity and achievement by the institution in addressing challenges across the full range of the institution and promoting gender equality within and *beyond* the institution.

Applications should demonstrate how Athena SWAN is completely embedded within the institution with strong leadership in promoting and championing the charter principles; including consideration of gender equality for professional and support staff and trans people.

This should be complemented by data demonstrating the impact of Athena SWAN activities. The institution should also demonstrate that they have taken an intersectional approach to analysing data and devising possible solutions to identified challenges.

### Validity

It depends on the level of the award: institutions/departments need to re-apply within 3 years or 4 years to renew the award.

### Interlinkages with other certification schemes

Project Juno and Athena SWAN are reciprocal awards, meaning that when a department has achieved one, they can convert it to the other using existing paperwork provided that they are a Juno Supporter and the





institution (where the department belongs) has achieved at least Athena SWAN Bronze. Both schemes have additional requirements which should be consulted<sup>16</sup>.

#### **Interlinkages with Research Funding regulations/processes**

Athena SWAN received a major boost in 2011, when the UK Chief Medical Officer announced that the National Institute for Health Research would only expect to shortlist medical schools for Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) and Unit (BRU) funding if the associate academic school holds a Silver Athena SWAN award. This was later expanded to include Patient Safety Research Centre funding in 2012. Athena SWAN has since started to work with the Medical and Dental Schools Councils. In 2016, in the first round of funding to be awarded since the Chief Medical Officer's announcement, the Department of Health awarded £816m to 20 BRCs, all of which are associated with a Silver Athena SWAN award-holding academic unit (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-816-million-investment-in-health-research>).

Although Research Councils UK (RCUK) does not link Athena SWAN to funding, in January 2013 it launched its 'Statement of Expectations for Equality and Diversity', which stated that it expects those in receipt of Research Council funding to "provide evidence of ways in which equality and diversity issues are managed at both an institutional and department level". It recommended that the evidence include participation in schemes such as Athena SWAN and Project Juno.

#### **Eligibility and requirements:**

##### **Eligibility**

Departments, research institutes and universities can apply.

##### **Requirements**

For an institution or department to be eligible to apply for an Athena SWAN Charter award, the HEI must sign up to the May 2015 update of the Athena SWAN principles and have no outstanding membership/subscription fees. There are other requirements that slightly differ depending on the level of award (gold, silver, bronze) and the target audience.

- For gold institution award: The institution must hold a valid Athena SWAN Silver award; this can be either a pre- or post-May 2015 award. The institution must also hold department awards (see below): i) At least one department must have a valid Gold award. And ii) The majority of the institution's academic departments must hold valid Silver awards.
- For gold department award: It is required that the institution to which the applicant department belongs must hold a valid Athena SWAN Bronze, Silver or Gold award or Advance HE's gender equality charter mark award (granted in October 2014). The applicant department must hold a Silver department award.
- For gold research institute award: The institute must hold a valid Athena SWAN Silver award; this can be either an original pre-May 2015 award or expanded post-May 2015 award.
- For silver institution award: The institution must hold a valid Athena SWAN Bronze award or Advance HE's gender equality charter mark award (granted in October 2014). The institution must also hold department awards (see below). At least one department must have a valid Silver award.
- For silver department award: The institution to which the applicant department belongs must hold a valid Athena SWAN Bronze or Silver award or ECU's gender equality charter mark award (granted in October 2014). The department does not have to have achieved a Bronze department award prior to applying for Silver. However, holding a Bronze award may make it easier to evidence progress and impact of initiatives on gender equality.
- For bronze department award: The institution to which the applicant department belongs must hold a valid Athena SWAN Bronze or Silver award or ECU's gender equality charter mark award (granted in October 2014). A department may decide to apply for an award in the same submission round that the parent institution applies for its first institution award. While this is allowed, applicants must be aware that should the institution be unsuccessful in its application the department will be ineligible for an award.

##### **Other information**

For the November 2018 round, there were 164 applications (for all levels) with 109 being successful at that level (66% success rate).

#### **Business model:**

<sup>16</sup> Here is the link to the Athena Swan guidance and conversion forms to Bronze and Silver: <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/juno/>





The Business model is not clear. Advance HE is a professional body with a charitable status, registered as company limited by guarantee. Possibly, application fees are the main source of funding. As mentioned above, in 2018 ECU was merged into a single body with the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) called Advance HE.

#### **Certification process, assessment, and support:**

Athena SWAN Charter award applications are assessed by peer review panels convened by Advance HE which then recommend their decisions on awards to the latter.

At least two members of Advance HE staff will be present on the panel to moderate and provide secretariat functions. The moderator will assist the panel by providing guidance on the application and assessment process and ensure that the panel complies with the requirements and guidance set out in the panellist role description. To ensure consistency of panel assessment, if required, the moderator will provide guidance on whether the application meets the requirements of the award level applied for. The secretary will record the key discussion points of the award panel and request that the panel identifies what feedback should be provided to the applicant.

The panel will review up to six submissions in advance of the meeting.

Panellists will discuss each application and take a decision on whether to recommend to Advance HE that an award is conferred. The panel have a number of options when taking a decision about each application. The panel may recommend to Advance HE that they confer or renew the award at the level sought, at a lower level, or even at a higher level. The panel may also recommend not to confer an award.

The panel provides detailed feedback to unsuccessful candidates and it provides advice and guidance for applications<sup>17</sup>, examples of good practices<sup>18</sup>, and other resources<sup>19</sup>.

In addition, Advance HE often procures evaluation of the scheme itself by external organisations to understand the impact of the scheme in the sector and identify ways for further improvement. In 2014, an independent evaluation (by Loughborough University) into the impact and effectiveness of Athena SWAN Charter has confirmed that the awards scheme advanced gender equality and changes the working culture and attitude within participating departments and universities. More information can be found here:

<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/evaluating-the-effectiveness-and-impact-of-the-athena-swan-charter.pdf>

In 2018, Advance HE commissioned Ortus Economic Research and Loughborough University to evaluate the impact of the Athena SWAN Charter across the higher education and research sector to determine its effectiveness as a vehicle for sustainable change, and to identify areas for further development. For example: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/impact-evaluation-athena-swan-charter-2019>

A recent review of the Athena SWAN charter was undertaken and the report has been published in March 2020 which included recommendations to improve further the scheme in the future including the streamlining of the application process and reduction of administrative process, the consistency and transparency of award outcome etc. More information can be found here:

<https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/review-of-the-athena-swan-charter/>

#### **Criteria and Indicators used:**

When assessing submissions, the panel expect to see evidence of a rigorous and thorough evaluation process. It will consider the following themes at all levels of award:

- Communication (How well are the policies and plans communicated to staff?)
- Senior or high-level commitment -Is there commitment from senior staff? How is it communicated?
- Effective analysis of the data (What does the data show, and which actions are being taken to address the issues identified?) How will impact be measured?
- Self-reflection and honesty (The panel accepts that challenges may be faced and mistakes may be made, but these need to be recognised openly together with the steps taken to address them).
- Engagement (Are staff at every level involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies?)

Panellists will also provide specific data in relation to the different sections in the application:

- Letter of endorsement;
- Description of the department/institution;

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/apply-award/writing-your-application/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-good-practice-in-heis/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/athena-swan-resources/>



- Self-assessment process;
- A picture of department/institution (Student data; academic staff data);
- Supporting and advancing women's careers (data for careers of staff, flexible working, organisation and culture);
- Case studies (for silver/gold);
- Further information and action plan.

In reaching a decision on the appropriate level of award, panels will consider:

- the clarity of the evidence provided of what has been done and what is planned
- the rationale for what has been done and what is planned and how they link to the organisation's strategic mission and goals
- how successful the actions taken have been, how that success was measured and evaluated and how the organisation and the individuals who work in it have benefited
- the link between the data and the action plans
- the understanding of the institutional context/local circumstances and key issues demonstrated
- the significance of any changes, programmes/initiatives in terms of their anticipated outcomes, their sustainability and the likely longer term impact on the organisation, its processes and its culture
- the level of input, investment, involvement, commitment and support from senior management, heads of departments, senior academics and research team leaders (men and women)
- consultation with input from all research academic staff (men and women), particularly encouraging women's participation
- the extent to which what was developed and introduced was different, innovative or particularly challenging

the suitability and sustainability of what has been developed and the ease with which changes have been or are likely to become embedded in the organisational/ departmental culture

- the extent to which activities, programmes and changes have successfully addressed perceptions and expectations that shape or constrain career choices and outcomes
- the extent to which the value of what has been done is recognised, welcomed and valued by staff generally

#### **Gender, diversity, and excellence:**

At Bronze and Silver level, institutions are expected to consider the role of the intersection of gender with ethnicity for both academic and professional and support staff. Self-assessment teams are expected to consider **intersectionality** in increased detail for the higher level of award.

At Bronze level, if it is not possible for the institution to cover this within the application (i.e. because of lack of data), the panel will expect to see that appropriate actions have been put in place (i.e. actions to improve collection of data). At Silver level, an explanation of any actions implemented and their impact should be provided.



**A note on Athena SWAN and its relevance for CASPER**

The CASPER consortium is in direct contact with GENDERACTION, which informed the consortium that it is organising a mutual learning meeting with representatives of numerous European States (i.e. Austria, Malta, Czech Republic, and Cyprus) on Athena SWAN to be conducted by the end of August 2020.

This CAS in particular, which was created in the UK, has already been adopted in other countries, such as Ireland, Australia and Canada, and has the potential of being adopted also in other European countries - the mutual learning session is organised exactly with the objective of exploring the possibility to translate it in the national levels, by also considering potential strategies to motivate the organisations to apply to the certification.

Athena SWAN, which will receive particular attention already during this first overview, is to be considered under a new light also for the CASPER project. **If indeed Athena SWAN were to be widespread further in the European area, it would be a strong competitor** for an eventual European Certification on Gender in Research and Higher Education. In this case, a specific action (or no-action) scenario should be taken into careful consideration.



<h1>Catalyst Award</h1> <p><b>Award</b>  <a href="https://www.catalyst.org/solution/catalyst-award/">https://www.catalyst.org/solution/catalyst-award/</a></p> <p><b>Awarding body:</b>  <b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p><b>1987</b></p> <p><b>International scope (US based)</b>  <a href="mailto:catalystaward@catalyst.org">catalystaward@catalyst.org</a>  <a href="mailto:europa@catalyst.org">europa@catalyst.org</a></p> <p><b>Catalyst (NGO)</b>  <b>Business and Others</b></p>
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### Overall description:

The Catalyst Award is an award scheme which is active since 1987 thanks to Catalyst, a US-based non-profit which does research and consulting on Diversity & Inclusion, focusing especially on gender equality and the advancement of women in the business sector. The award is conferred during a yearly conference and dinner: since its start, the Catalyst award has been assigned to 101 initiatives from 90 organizations from around the world. It certifies "initiatives", considering both processes and outputs.

### Validity

The Award does not expire, hence there is no possibility to renew it; it is assigned with an average of 3 awards per year.

### Eligibility and requirements:

#### Eligibility

1. The organization must have at least two women on its Board of Directors
2. Women must represent at least 10% of the organization's Band 1 executive leaders
3. The initiative to award started at least three years ago
4. Being able to provide at least three years of complete data and supporting metrics for the initiative, including for the initiative's start year and current year
5. The supporting metrics for the initiative must show a positive change for women between the year the initiative started and the current year/to date
6. If the initiative is selected as a Catalyst Award winner, the organization's CEO or Managing Partner/Director must be available to attend the Catalyst Award Dinner and accept the Catalyst Award in person
7. The organization must not have hired Catalyst for an in-depth and strategic consulting engagement (two or more days) within the past three years
8. The organization must not have nominated an initiative for the Catalyst Award within the past two years
9. The organization must not have been involved in a merger with another organization within three years of nomination or being currently involved in a pending merger with another organization.

#### Requirements

Pay a USD \$7,500 nomination fee; demonstrate eligibility (self-assessment)

#### Business model:

The costs related to the award are partly covered by the application fees, and further fundraising is done during the Awarding conference and dinner; the rest is provided by Catalyst, the certification provider, which is registered as a charity and funds its work through donations by "Supporters" (<https://www.catalyst.org/become-a-supporter/>), which are mostly corporations, firms, associations, academic institutions, other organizations, and also individuals (<https://www.catalyst.org/supporters/>).

#### Certification process and support:

Self-assessment for the first phase; second phase interviews, focus groups, and on-site visits.

Self-assessment for the first phase; then *"the Committee assesses submissions through research and telephone interviews and selects a small number of initiatives to examine further during intensive, on-site visits. Through interviews and focus groups with executives, senior women, human resources professionals, and other employees, the Committee gauges each initiative's effectiveness and impact. Organizations selected for site visits receive more than 500 hours of review, and may request a meeting to discuss strengths and opportunities for improvement with Committee members. The Committee and Catalyst executive leadership then determine the winners."*

Best practices and case studies are provided (i.e. profile of past winning initiatives); specific guidelines and checklists for self-assessment are freely available; organizations selected for site visits "may request a meeting to discuss strengths and opportunities for improvement with Committee members".



**Criteria and Indicators available:**

The criteria for the evaluation of the initiatives are

- Strategy and Rationale
- Senior Leadership Activities
- Accountability and Transparency
- Communication
- Employee Engagement
- Innovation
- Measurable Results

**Gender, diversity, and excellence: in research**

There is an **intersectional approach**, through particular attention to diversity and inclusion on various dimensions: "Winning initiatives must show proven, measurable results that benefit women across a range of dimensions, among them race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, generation, nationality, disability, and Indigenous or Aboriginal peoples."

No explicit **link between GE, D&I, and excellence** is given, but the awarding of best practices on gender equality is considered as "honouring excellence".



# Disability Standard

N/A

Standard

<https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/our-services/disability-standard/>

National - UK

Email: [consultancy@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk](mailto:consultancy@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk)

**Awarding body:**

**Business Disability Forum**

**Target Audience:**

**Businesses and Universities**

## Overall description:

The Disability Standard is a whole-organisation disability management audit developed by the Business Disability Forum to help organisations measure and improve the performance for disabled customers, clients or service users, employees and stakeholders. It enables understanding how disability-smart an organisation is and to build a disability smart organisation. There are three different categories: Gold (with a final assessment of 90% or more); Silver (80% or more); Bronze (70% or more).

### Validity

Not stated in the official website; unclear if there is a possibility to renew.

## Eligibility and requirements:

### Eligibility

No particular exceptions apply

### Requirements

Entry requirement: each organisation will be allocated one super-user who will have overall control of the whole submission.

## Business model:

Main source of funding: application fees.

## Certification process, assessment, and support:

"1. Self-assessment on disability in 10 areas [see the criteria and indicators section]. Each organization can self-assess how different business units are doing in one area, or in all 10 areas, and print off their respective report.

Each organisation will be allocated one super-user who will have overall control of the submission.

2. The organization should decide whether they want to have a Business Disability Forum evaluation.

3. After confirmation of the willingness to have the evaluation, they allocate a disability consultant to work with the organisation through the process.

4. Agreements on when the Business Disability Forum evaluation will be undertaken, and booking of the date.

5. Submission of the organisation's assessment for Business Disability Forum evaluation by the mutually agreed deadline.

6. The Business Disability Forum's evaluation team will carry out a comprehensive review of the assessment, looking at the submitted evidence.

7. The Business Disability Forum evaluation report arrives within two months.

8. Personal debriefing over the phone or at the BDF offices (all members), or at the organisation's office."

## Criteria and Indicators used:

- Commitment
- Know-how
- Adjustments
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Products and services
- Suppliers and partners
- Communication
- Premises
- Information and communication technology (ICT)



# GEISS-DIVERSITY

2017

## Certification

<https://arborus.org/>

## International

arborus@arborus.info; +33 643398350

## Awarding body:

Bureau Veritas is an international company specialized in Testing, Inspection and Certification (TIC) services, both as a second- and as a third-party certification body.

## Target Audience:

Business and NGOs

## Overall description:

“The GEEIS (Gender Equality & Diversity European & International Standard) label is a management support tool and contributes to promoting gender equality in the workplace. It certifies the level of resources mobilized by the company to achieve equality at work, as well as the successful deployment of the related human resource policy. Since 2017, the Endowment Fund Arborus (established on 8 April 2010, under the patronage of the European Social and Economic Council) set up a complementary tool, which now substitutes the original one: the GEEIS-DIVERSITY label. It takes into account the issue of diversity and inclusion in the business worldwide, taking into account regional and local specificities regarding these issues. GEEIS allows international companies to harmonize practices between headquarters and subsidiaries. For each applicant, both headquarters and subsidiaries are audited to ensure that policies promoting human resources are in place and that the tools used to support professional equality between women and men are appropriate.”

### Validity

The period of validity is of 4 years. After 24 months a mid-term audit is conducted.

### Interlinkages with other certification schemes et al.

There is a link with the UN system of Sustainable Development Goals. GEEIS companies (certified by Bureau Veritas) are also promoting activities in line with a combination of relevant SDGs (besides 5-gender equality), that is, 1-no poverty, 2-no hunger, 4-quality education, 8-good jobs and economic growth, can apply to receive the GEEIS Trophy.

### Interlinkages with national quality assurance mechanisms

Unclear in practice: “As the GEEIS or GEEIS-DIVERSITY label is a tool for progress and general interest, it recognises the national certifications already obtained and complements them, without replacing them”.

## Eligibility and requirements:

### Eligibility

Any organisation, public or private, in any sector. Initially addressed to international companies, today GEEIS is applicable to all realities, including those of national/local relevance.

### Requirements

1) The assumption of a formal commitment; 2) The implementation of concrete actions on gender equality and diversity issues; 3) The evaluation of the effectiveness of the actions implemented; 4) Commitment to continuous improvement through the development of good practices; 5) Measuring the impact of good practice on their beneficiaries.

### Other information

No. of applicants unavailable. Since 2017, when it was launched, GEEIS-DIVERSITY certified 50 enterprises (35 in Europe, 7 in Africa, 4 in North America, 2 in Asia and 2 in Oceania). Considering that many of them are global businesses and that local branches are included (e.g., L'OREAL, GEODIS, CARREFOUR, RANSTAD) the total number of affected entities is potentially larger.

In 2019, 5 global companies (CAMFIL, L'OREAL, DANONE, ORANGE and SODEXO) have been awarded the GEEIS trophy during a ceremony at the UN Headquarters in New York. A selection panel composed of members of the United Nations and members of the Arborus Fund was appointed to this aim.

## Business model:





The certification agency (Bureau Veritas) has an exclusive partnership with the Endowment Fund Arborus to certify compliance to the GEEIS-DIVERSITY standards. Applicants contribute through fees. The main funding mechanism is through private Body sponsorship.

**Certification process, assessment, and support:**

Very generically described. “To obtain the GEEIS and GEEIS-DIVERSITY, the group must put in place steering, training and communication tools to move towards equal opportunities. The labels are awarded following an on-site audit and a documentary study. The certifying body measures the level of resources implemented and ensures the proper deployment of the HR policy in terms of professional equality at the parent company and in the group's subsidiaries that are concerned by the GEEIS or GEEIS-DIVERSITY. A series of criteria is used to assess the involvement and progress made. Local evaluators, thanks to their specific knowledge of language, culture, legislation, trade union relations, NGO networks etc., ensure high-quality assessment.”

The data collected are qualitative and quantitative data (unclear in what form), policy documentation.

It is unclear whether any support is provided for the applicants.

**Criteria and Indicators used:**

The areas of indicators for the assessment are:

- Presence of a policy on gender equality and diversity issues;
- Initiatives promoted by the company on these topics;
- Methods of evaluating company policies;
- Training and awareness-raising activities carried out by the company;
- Analysis of the distribution of personnel by professional categories and responsibilities;
- Remuneration practices;
- Measures to ensure a work-life balance;
- Promotion of social dialogue on equality and diversity issues.



<b>Juno</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Type</b> <a href="http://www.iop.org/about/diversity/initiatives/juno/index.html">http://www.iop.org/about/diversity/initiatives/juno/index.html</a>	<b>National – United Kingdom</b> <b>Available contacts</b>
<b>Awarding body:</b> <b>Target Audience:</b>	<b>IOP Institute of Physics</b> <b>Departments</b>

**Overall description:**

Project Juno is an award scheme that recognises and rewards physics departments, schools, institutes and groups that can demonstrate they have taken action to address gender equality at all levels and to foster a more inclusive working environment. Project Juno is based on six principles covering all aspects of life in an academic physics department. Those engaged in Juno are offered support throughout their Juno journey, including free workshops and resources.

There are different categories:

- Juno supporter: Institutions start their Juno journey by endorsing the six principles and making a commitment to work towards Practitioner and then Champion.
- Juno Practitioner: institutions start their Juno journey are well underway by meeting Principle 1 of the Juno framework. Qualitative and quantitative data and evidence are gathered and an initial action plan demonstrates how you aim to achieve Champion status.
- Juno Champion: Institutions demonstrate that the six principles are embedded throughout. Further evidence is gathered, and the action plan demonstrates how institutions will continue to further embed and develop good practice.
- Juno Excellence Programme and Award: As a Juno Champion, institutions develop a programme of activities in conjunction with the institute to showcase and embed successful and innovative practice nationally.

**Validity**

For Supporter, Practitioner awards are valid for three years and Champion for four years.

**Interlinkages with other certification schemes**

Juno and Athena SWAN Project Juno and Athena SWAN are reciprocal awards at Practitioner/Bronze and Champion/Silver, meaning that once you have achieved one, you can convert it to the other, providing you are already a Juno Supporter and your institution already holds an institutional Athena SWAN Bronze award.

**Eligibility and requirements:****Eligibility**

Departments of physics and applied science can apply.

**Requirements**

N/A

**Business model:**

Unclear. Potentially the main source of funding may be the Institute of Physics.

**Certification process, assessment, and support:**

All applications and renewals for Practitioner, Champion and Juno Excellence awards are judged by a panel of physicists (Juno panel) who have in-depth understanding of gender equality in physics. They are aware of the specific challenges that physics faces and have extensive knowledge of best practice in gender-equality initiatives that have already been established, both within and beyond the physics community.

To become a **supporter**, applicants need to make commitment to the six principles; nominate a “champion” for Juno process and engage senior management; make commitment to becoming a Practitioner and Champion and send a letter with a named Juno contact.

For **practitioner** award: applicants need to establish Juno committee; gather qualitative and quantitative evidence; undertake self-assessment using good-practice checklist; devise Practitioner action plan. The Panel assesses evidence for Practitioner at its meeting and decide whether it will approve the application and provide detailed feedback.

For **Champion** award: Applicants start implementing Practitioner action plan; they gather more robust evidence; devise more in-depth action plan, highlighting progress and what is still to be done; arrange a mid-Practitioner formal site visit to receive feedback on progress so far and discuss priorities as applicants work



towards Champion. The panel assesses evidence for Champion at its meeting and make decision on approval and detailed feedback. To be considered for Juno Excellence Programme and Award: Applicants need to arrange a Champion renewal visit three years after becoming Champion to receive feedback on progress and priorities for renewal; discuss with the diversity team a programme of activities applicants could develop for Juno Excellence; and finally apply to renew Champion status after four years.

Applicants need to undertake self-assessment and then be reviewed by Juno panel (panel comprised of physicists). The Panel comprises a Chair and at least five other members. With the approval of the Chair of the Panel, and the IOP Diversity and Inclusion Committee, panel members are drawn from Juno Champion and Practitioner departments. The Panel shall include at least two academic physicists and one non-academic physicist. There shall be at least one man and one woman on the Panel.

The IoP provides the following general support:

- Written feedback on draft applications and action plans.
- Comprehensive written feedback on all your applications and renewals.
- Free best-practice workshops around the country, giving you the opportunity to network with other departments at different stages of the Juno journey.
- Resources that help you to navigate your Juno journey, from best-practice guides including guidance for small departments through to a regular Juno update.

#### Criteria and Indicators used:

The six principles are listed here. They also have more specific subsections<sup>20</sup>:

- A robust organisational framework to deliver equality of opportunity and reward;
- Appointment and selection processes and procedures that encourage men and women to apply for academic posts at all levels;
- Departmental structures and systems that support and encourage the career progression and promotion of all staff, and enable men and women to progress and continue in their careers;
- Departmental organisation, structure, management arrangements and culture that are open, inclusive and transparent, and encourage the participation of all staff;
- Flexible approaches and provisions that enable individuals, at all career and life stages, to optimise their contribution to their department, institution and to SET;
- An environment where professional conduct is embedded into departmental culture and behaviour.

It is not clear how far these principles are used for assessment although it is assumed that they play a key role.

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<sup>20</sup> The organisational framework and a further description of the 6 Juno principles can be found here: [https://www.iop.org/about/diversity/initiatives/juno/documentation/file\\_73404.pdf](https://www.iop.org/about/diversity/initiatives/juno/documentation/file_73404.pdf)



<h1>Label Egalité professionnelle, Label Diversité</h1> <p><b>Quality Label</b> <a href="https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/emploi/label-diversite">https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/emploi/label-diversite</a></p> <p><b>Awarding body:</b></p> <p><b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p><b>2004 + 2008</b></p> <p><b>National // France</b> 11 rue Francis de Pressensé - 93571 La Plaine Saint-Denis Cedex - Tél.: +33 (0)1 41 62 80 11 - Fax: +33 (0)1 49 17 90 00 <a href="http://www.afnor.org">www.afnor.org</a></p> <p><b>The label is property of the French government; the audit process is carried out by “Afnor Certification”, a private body.</b></p> <p><b>Both Private and Public bodies, either the whole structure or only certain activities and departments.</b></p>
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#### Overall description:

Established in 2004, the Label Egalité (Equality Label) aims to promote professional equality between men and women. Supported by the State and social partners, the Label Egalité is issued by AFNOR Certification. It is a certification of good practices and a methodological guide in terms of equality of rights between men and women within the organization. It is based on 2 fundamental principles: 1) equality of rights (no discrimination allowed regarding the gender); equality of opportunities (foreseeing to reverse the inequalities that women encounter).

Established in 2008, the Label Diversité (Diversity Label) aims to prevent discrimination and to promote diversity in the public and private sectors. The label, property of the State, allows the candidate or labelled structure to evaluate its human resources and modify them if necessary. Delivered by AFNOR Certification, the label promotes a constructive social dialogue. It is also a guide in terms of methodology and an emulation tool allowing the organization to further strengthen equal rights and create a leverage. The Label Diversité is issued by AFNOR Certification following recurrent assessments to advance practices, target areas of development and strengthen the effectiveness of actions. As a consensual mechanism, the label is awarded after the opinion of the National Labelling Commission, on which the social partners, representatives of the State and a college of experts sit.

#### Validity

4 years, with possibility to renew.

#### Interlinkages with other certification schemes

Link with Label Egalité professionnelle entre les femmes et les hommes, also property of the French government and whose assessment is carried out by “Afnor certification”. Since 2015 applicants can apply to both with a single application form, with a single basis and separate specific modules, even though the assessments are separated and autonomous.

#### Interlinkages with national quality assurance mechanisms

Label Diversité is part of the national quality assurance policies and is property of the government; public bodies can apply to it.

#### Eligibility and requirements:

##### Eligibility

No particular restrictions apply

##### Requirements

Direct application (with possibility, in the case of Label Diversité, to do an online test to review the applicant's readiness for the review). No particular exceptions apply

##### Other information

Label Egalité: Around 90 certified institutions: 50% governmental organisms, 40% medium/large companies (more than 50 employees), 10% small companies (less than 50 employees).



Label Diversité: 108 certified institutions (oct 2019): 31% governmental organisms, 46% medium/large companies (more than 50 employees), 23% small companies (less than 50 employees). Around 20 institutions got both labels (Diversité & Egalité)

#### Business model:

The Label was founded with public funding; The auditing cost are covered by the applicants, and it is calculated according to the applicants' dimensions (i.e. the number of people to involve, and the quantity of sites to audit): "the audit time can vary between 1.25 to 5.75 days on a single site. The day price varies between 1100 to 1500 € per day".

#### Certification process, assessment, and support:

- 1) Submission of application file
- 2) Submission of the file "Cahier des Charges", which is differentiated between public bodies and private bodies; the latter are differentiated depending on their dimensions (50+ workers and 50- workers).
- 3) Study of the whole by AFNOR Certification and formation of a team of specialized auditors
- 4) Initial evaluation on site(s), renewed every 24 months
- 5) Analysis of the evaluation report by the National Labelling Commission and exchange between the members of this commission and the candidate structure
- 6) Decision to award the label by AFNOR Certification

The data collected for assessment are qualitative (self-assessment following a standardized, in-depth questionnaire; interviews; focus groups;) and quantitative (ie. ratio of women in higher positions).

As support for applicants there is a free online test to check whether the applicant may be able to successfully apply, with feedback and suggestions (Label Diversité); a free online instrument to calculate necessary budget for certification; a reading guide for the "cahier des charges"; feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

#### Criteria and Indicators used:

There are 7 criteria for the combined certifications. Most of them are the same, with Label Diversité adding one specific criterion (aspects specific to Label Diversité are in *italics*). The criteria are:

- State of the art, diagnosis and risk analysis
- Definition and implementation of the policy on professional equality *and diversity*
- *Listening unit (note: whether a listening unit for complaints has been set up and how does it work)*
- Internal communication, awareness-raising, training
- Consideration of equality and/or diversity policies in the management of human resources and governance
- External communication, territorial anchoring, relations with suppliers and customers/users of the organisation
- Evaluation and areas for policy improvement.

Such indicators are further explained and listed in detail in the "Cahier des charges"<sup>21</sup> which is freely available for applicants.

#### Gender, diversity, and excellence:

The Label Egalité does not have an intersectional approach; the Label Diversité, instead, "is concerned with diversity in all its expressions, through the 24 discrimination criteria defined by law, namely: origin, sex, mores, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, pregnancy, genetic characteristics, loss of autonomy, particular vulnerability resulting from the apparent or known economic situation of its author, membership - real or supposed - in an ethnic group, a nation, a race, political opinions, union or mutualist activities, membership or not of a specific religion, physical appearance, patronymic, place of residence, bank domiciliation, state of health, disability, proficiency in a language other than French."

There is a strict link with the national laws and policy governance: "By the requirements it carries, the Diversity Label is at the heart of the concerns of the Ministry of Labour. Given its missions and its permanent exchanges with economic players, the General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP) ensures its management for companies, in conjunction with the Directorate General of Administration and the public service (DGAFP) for administrations".

<sup>21</sup> The "Cahier des charges" is available at <https://certification.afnor.org/download/piecejointe-login/bf5e3ddb-39b1-4916-b0cf-1c7f99792df2> (only in French).



<h1>EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality) Certification</h1> <p>Certification  <a href="http://edge-cert.org/">http://edge-cert.org/</a></p> <p><b>Awarding body:</b></p> <p><b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p><b>2011</b></p> <p>International  <a href="mailto:info@edge-strategy.com">info@edge-strategy.com</a>      +41 41 530 11 49</p> <p>The certification bodies are trained and accredited by the EDGE Certified Foundation. Certification firms currently approved to issue EDGE Certificates include Intertek, FLOCERT and SGS.</p> <p>Businesses</p>
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### Overall description:

EDGE stands for Economic Dividends for Gender Equality and is distinguished by its rigor and focus on business impact.

EDGE is the leading global assessment methodology and business certification standard for gender equality. It measures where organizations stand in terms of gender balance across their pipeline, pay equity, effectiveness of policies and practices to ensure equitable career flows as well as inclusiveness of their culture. The certification has three levels: EDGE Assess (recognizing commitment); EDGE Move (showcasing progress) and EDGE Lead (Celebrating Success). It is not compulsory for a company to start from EDGE Assess.

### Validity

2 years, with possibility to renew

### Interlinkages with other certification schemes

Link with Mercer-EDGE

### Eligibility and requirements:

#### Eligibility

Any kind of company

#### Requirements

Initial step for any company: An online assessment (the EDGE Assessment Tool) examines three sources of company information.

#### Other information

The methodology was designed for medium to large organizations and, in order to see the full impact of the analysis, sufficient underlying data is required. Therefore, 200 employees per country of operation are needed for an organization to be eligible for EDGE Certification. If an organization has fewer employees, it is possible to contact EDGE to discuss options.

### Business model:

Main source of funding are the application fees.

### Certification process, assessment, and support:

The first step for applicants is alignment through review and documentation of the business imperative for gender equality in the company. The second step is measurement: self-assessment of gender balance, pay equity, the effectiveness of the policies and practices and the culture inclusiveness. Then there is benchmarking and planning: the applicants need to benchmark against the EDGE standard and against industry peers, and develop an action plan and strategic roadmap to maximize progress. Following a successful independent audit by a third party-certification body, the EDGE Certification is awarded. The auditing is planned together with a Certification Body of the applicant's choice; it involves a remote desktop review, followed by an on-site visit. The awarded institution is then invited to publish the EDGE seal on its communications and site, and then to take action by implementing a strategic roadmap and staying well-informed of leading practices through peer-to-peer executive networks.

### Criteria and Indicators used:





Through quantitative indicators

- gender balance at all levels
- Pay equity

Through qualitative indicators

- The effectiveness of policies and practices to ensure equitable career flows for women and men
- Inclusiveness of the business culture

The measurements are made through

- Statistics (organisational data)
- Infrastructure (implemented policies and practices which create the gender equality infrastructure)
- Experience (employees' surveys capturing the workplace experience and perceptions surrounding it).



<b>Minerva Informatics Equality</b>		<b>2016</b>
<b>Award</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>International</b>
<a href="https://www.informatics-europe.org/awards/minerva-informatics-equality-award.html">https://www.informatics-europe.org/awards/minerva-informatics-equality-award.html</a>		<b>Phone +41 44 635 4354; E-mail <a href="mailto:administration@informatics-europe.org">administration@informatics-europe.org</a></b>
<b>Awarding body:</b>		<b>Informatics Europe</b>
<b>Target Audience:</b>		<b>Informatics research and education (computer science, computing) RPOs</b>

**Overall description:**

The Informatics Europe Minerva Informatics Equality Award recognises best practices in Departments or Faculties of European Universities or Research Institutes and Labs that have been demonstrated to have a positive impact for women. On a three-year cycle, the award focuses each year on a different stage of the career pipeline, i.e. 1) Developing the careers of female faculty, including retention and promotion; 2) Supporting the transition of female PhD and postdoctoral researchers into faculty positions; 3) Encouraging female students to enrol in Computer Science/Informatics programmes and retaining them. The award carries a prize of 5,000 Euros and is to be used for further work promoting gender equality.

**Validity**

Period of validity not specified. It is not possible to renew it.

**Eligibility and requirements:****Eligibility**

Departments, faculties or labs of institutions located in one of the member or candidate member countries of the Council of Europe or Israel. Institutions associated with members of the WIRE Working Group and of the Award committee are not eligible.

**Requirements**

Entrants may nominate themselves or be nominated. Proposals should be submitted to include:

- Description of the initiative (max 2 pages);
- Evidence of its impact (max 2 pages);
- An optional reference list (which may include URLs of supporting material);
- Optionally, one or two letters of support. The letters of support may come, for example, from female staff members who have benefited from the scheme.

**Business model:**

Informatics Europe, which presents the Minerva Informatics Equality Award, is a non-profit organisation based in Switzerland. It is funded by a membership scheme that offers a variety of levels, with some activities supported by sponsorship from the private and academic sectors.

**Certification process, assessment, and support:**

The application process asks for a description of gender equality initiatives and evidence of impact - it does not specify how this is presented or what type of supporting data is needed.

The assessment method is a review of the submission by a panel of experts.

Informatics Europe supports WIRE (Women in Informatics Research and Education) to promote actions that help improve gender balance at all stages of the career path in Informatics (Computer Science, Computing). Also, noteworthy runners up from submissions to the award are used as exemplars of best practice in publications.

**Criteria and Indicators used:**

Unclear.



<b>Norwegian GE Award</b>	<b>2007 (not active since 2014)</b>
Award <a href="http://kifinfo.no/en/content/gender-equality-award">http://kifinfo.no/en/content/gender-equality-award</a>	National // Norway <b>Ella Ghosh - Senior Adviser</b> ella.ghosh@uhr.no +47 94 17 10 47
<b>Awarding body:</b> <b>Target Audience:</b>	<b>Ministry of Education and Research of Norway</b> <b>Universities, RPOs</b>

**Overall description:**

"The Gender Equality Act § 1a states that the employer is responsible for set down goals and plans to achieve gender equality for all employees. The Ministry of Education and Research requires universities and university colleges to establish an action plan for gender equality along with the appropriate measures. On this basis the Ministry sets the goals for the gender equality work through the letters of allocation that go out to the institutions.

The establishment of the Gender Equality Award is a concrete and visible ministerial measure to encourage institutions within higher education and research, and to give the gender equality work an extra boost. The award aims to increase the proportion of women in academic positions and thereby promote a better gender balance in academia, and is an addition to the resources that the institutions themselves have reserved for gender equality work"

**Validity**

N/A

**Eligibility and requirements:****Eligibility**

Universities, university colleges and institutes may apply.

**Requirements**

The institutions could submit both their general action plans and plans implemented by one of their subdivisions.

**Business model:**

Main source of funding is the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education and Research. Effort wise, the institutions provide the most resources, as the award is for the work that institutions have already done.

**Certification process, assessment, and support:**

"The award will go to institutions that have worked to promote women in science by implementing action plans for gender equality. The institutions can submit both their general action plans and plans implemented by one of their subdivisions. The award shall support an institution's action plans and must be used for specific gender equality measures. It will be taken into consideration whether the institution can show that it has implemented specific measures and carried out its action plan. The award is a supplement to the resources the institution itself will spend on its action plan and gender equality measures. The application must state how much the institution has earmarked for these purposes. The submitted action plans must be approved and made public in order to compete for the award. If the institution has established measures not listed in the action plan, these can also be included. Action plans in the making (not completed) that are not approved by the institution, that are expired or too old will not be considered for the award. The Kif Committee will consider whether the award will go to one or more recipients after assessing the range and quality of the applications."

**Criteria and Indicators used:**

Quality of action plans (indicators unavailable)



<h1>REC Race Equality Charter</h1> <p><b>Certification</b>  <a href="https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/charters/race-equality-charter">https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/charters/race-equality-charter</a></p> <p><b>Awarding body:</b>  <b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p><b>2016</b></p> <p><b>National // UK</b>  <b>Advance HE, First floor, Napier House, 24 High Holborn, London, WC1V 6AZ</b></p> <p><b>Charity, company limited by guarantee</b>  <b>Universities, Departments, RPOs</b></p>
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### Overall description:

The REC is one of the services provided by Advance HE that is improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. It creates a framework through which institutions work to self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers standing in the way of minority ethnic staff and students. Member institutions develop initiatives and solutions for action.

Members can apply for a Bronze or Silver REC award, depending on their level of progress.

### Validity

Not stated; possibility to renew.

### Eligibility and requirements:

#### Eligibility

Membership of the Race Equality Charter is open to any HEI within the UK that is committed to the advancement of race equality within higher education. Membership is open to UK institutions that hold legal status as a higher education institution; UK HEIs must be a member of Advance HE and have chosen the REC Accreditation Package to join REC.

#### Requirements

None available online

#### Other information

There are 62 members and 14 award holders

### Business model:

Advance HE is a professional body with charitable status.

The main source of funding is application fees.

### Certification process, assessment, and support:

Review of the self-assessment by peer-reviewed panels convened by Advance HE. The data collected for assessment are qualitative and quantitative, and policy documentation. As extra support, members of the REC are able to: submit for institutional REC awards at Bronze and Silver level; access resources and publications to prepare award submissions; attend workshops on various topics to help prepare for an award; access advice and support from Advance HE's Equality Charters team; join the Race Equality Charter email forum; use the Race Equality Charter logo to highlight their commitment to race equality on institutional websites, materials and job adverts.

### Criteria and Indicators used:

- Communication (How well are the policies and plans communicated to staff?)
- Senior or high-level commitment - Is there commitment from senior staff? How is it communicated?
- Effective analysis of the data (What does the data show, and which actions are being taken to address the issues identified?) How will impact be measured?
- Self-reflection and honesty (The panel accepts that challenges may be faced and mistakes may be made, but these need to be recognised openly together with the steps taken to address them).
- Engagement (Are staff at every level involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies?)

### Gender, diversity, and excellence:

Two of the guiding principles reflect the need for **intersectionality**: minority ethnic staff and students are not a homogenous group. People from different ethnic backgrounds have different experiences of and outcomes from/within higher education; all individuals have multiple identities, and the intersection of those different identities should be considered wherever possible.



# Stonewall Global 2011

## Workplace Equality Index

### Award

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/global-workplace-equality-index>

### International

192 St John St, Clerkenwell, London EC1V 4JY

### Awarding body:

Stonewall

### Target Audience:

Businesses and Other (the index is open to all multinational employers)

### Overall description:

The Global Index empowers organisations to navigate the challenges of upholding inclusive values globally and make progress towards LGBT equality, wherever they operate. It provides organisations with a clear and rigorous action plan for their LGBT inclusion work across the globe. Each entrant compiles a submission demonstrating their organisation's performance against a set of best-practice criteria that is accompanied by supporting evidence. The criteria are split across nine different areas of employment policy and practice, examining both global working structures and operational country activity.

### Validity

1 year with possibility to renew

### Eligibility and requirements:

#### Eligibility

Open to all multinational employers

#### Requirements

Completion of an online submission form against a set of best-practice criteria, uploading of evidence by the applicant

#### Other information

Number of applicants unavailable, 14 of the best global companies identified

### Business model:

Stonewall is a charity, supported by fundraising, Charitable Trusts and Foundations and Statutory Grants.

### Certification process, assessment, and support:

Marking and ranking by the Stonewall team after the completion of an audit.

Feedback on best practice is provided in a shared report; for organisations that are members of a Stonewall Diversity Champion scheme there will be a feedback meeting from an Account Manager.

### Criteria and Indicators used:

- policies
- training information
- Staff engagement and networking
- career development
- leadership
- monitoring
- procurement
- community engagement
- global mobility
- additional work by the employer



<h2>Total E-QUALITY award</h2> <p><b>Award</b>  <a href="https://www.total-e-quality.de/award/">https://www.total-e-quality.de/award/</a> ;  <a href="https://www.gesis.org/en/cews/services/resources/total-e-quality">https://www.gesis.org/en/cews/services/resources/total-e-quality</a></p> <p><b>Awarding body:</b>  <b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p><b>1997</b></p> <p><b>National - Germany</b>  <b>Manuela Butkus Contact for applications in the business sector, administrations. membership and press contacts</b>  <b>Phone.: +49 (0)9708 909-110</b>  <b>Mail: manuela.butkus@dt-shop.com</b>  <b>Dr. Nina Steinweg Contact for applications in the science sector. (CEWS)</b>  <b>Phone.: + 49 (0)221 47694-264 -Mail: nina.steinweg@gesis.org</b></p> <p><b>TOTAL E-QUALITY Deutschland e. V.</b>  <b>Businesses and RPOs</b></p>
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### Overall description:

The total E-quality award is presented each year for exemplary activities in terms of human resource management aimed at providing equal opportunity. It is addressed to organisations from the private sector, science and administration and associations with a minimum of 15 employees that successfully implement gender equality in their personnel and organisation policies. Only voluntary activities that go above and beyond what is required by law qualify for the award.

Since 2016, it has been possible to complete a diversity “add-on” in the application form.

After an organisation has renewed the rating for five times, it will receive a sustainability award.

### Validity

3 years with possibility to renew

### Eligibility and requirements:

#### Eligibility

All companies and RPOs that have more than 15 employees. It does not really specify but I think it is also limited to companies based in Germany.

#### Requirements

Application by sending in the application documents. There is one deadline per year: for 2020 it is April 30th. Only those assessment documents which are signed by the management of the applying company will be used in the assessment process.

#### Other information

From 1997 to 2017, 735 awards have been presented to 305 organisations. In 2018, 50 organisations were awarded (27 businesses and to 23 organizations from the field of science and research; 11 applicants were able to be awarded for the first time; 29 organizations received the Add-On Award for Diversity; 2 were honoured with the Sustainability Award)

### Business model:

Total E-Quality is an association all resources stem either from admission fees for companies/RPOs, yearly membership fees, processing fees for companies applying for the award and donations. Until 2009 it has received financial resources from the German Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. No information on how these resources are spent was found.

### Certification process, assessment, and support:

The application is based on the so-called self-assessment tool, which at the same time offers suggestions and support for the implementation of activities to improve equal opportunities. The self-assessment tool (for scientific institutions and universities) is divided into eight fields of action in which the efforts to achieve equal opportunities can be expressed: 1. Recruitment and filling of posts; 2. Career and personnel development; 3. Reconciliation of work and family responsibilities (work-life balance); 4. Institutionalized gender equality policy; 5. Planning and control elements in organizational development; 6. Organizational culture; 7.

Research, teaching and studies; 8. Moral harassment, sexualized discrimination and violence. In addition to the application, the processing of the fields of action thus also serves as a self-assessment, on the basis of which a comparison with other scientific institutions can be made in the future in the sense of benchmarking.

The self-assessment tool is structured into 8 action fields and a statistical analysis on the employment of men and women (see below). For each action field specific indicators are defined which indicate the status quo of activities in these fields and who is responsible for implementing them. In attached documents the activities should be described in more detail and should prove that these activities are really implemented. Furthermore each organisation needs to describe its activities and objectives in a short narrative. The assessment takes into account activities targeted towards the research personnel as well as towards administrative personnel.

#### **Criteria and Indicators used:**

No indicators available online - there is only a quick check available online which asks the following questions, which are reflecting the 8 fields of action:

- Do you employ women in scientific and non-scientific management positions or do you employ women in highly specialised positions without management responsibility (as project managers or similar)?
- Do you involve women in selection committees and/or do you address women in tendering procedures?
- Are women - even part-time - supported professionally (e.g. mentoring programmes)?
- Do you support your employees with childcare (financially, organisationally)?
- Does the women's/ gender equality officer have sufficient resources to work effectively?
- Do you integrate gender equality policy elements into your planning and management instruments (e.g. monetary and structural management systems, controlling systems, evaluation procedures)?
- Is equal opportunity integrated into the mission statement of your organisation?
- Do you integrate findings from women's and gender studies in research, teaching and studies?
- Do you support the recruitment of young women for studies and their chances for scientific and non-scientific careers?
- Is diversity a focal point in your institution that you actively work on?

#### **Gender, diversity, and excellence:**

Excellence is not specifically mentioned in the documents but one of the action fields is called Research, Teaching and study and it refers to whether the gender dimension/gender studies are integrated into research, teaching and the curricular.

The crucial factor in this decision is a company's ability to strike a balance between economic requirements and the interests of their employees by implementing suitable human resources strategies to establish equal opportunities.



<h1>Winning Women</h1> <h2>Gender Equality Certification</h2> <p>Certification  <a href="http://winningwomeninstitute.org/">http://winningwomeninstitute.org/</a></p> <p><b>Awarding body:</b></p> <p><b>Target Audience:</b></p>	<p><b>2017</b></p> <p>National // Italy  Address: Viale Piave 28, 20129 Milano, Italy: Tel. +39.02.36591012; E-mail: info@winningwomeninstitute.org</p> <p><b>Winning Women Institute</b>  Audits and data collection/analysis are conducted by a private company (Ria Grant Thornton).  Businesses</p>
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### Overall description:

Reported as the first Italian certification about Gender Equality, it was set up by the Winning Women Institute, a non-profit association. It assigns a “quality brand” to those companies that spread the principle of Gender Equality in the workplace, “with the objective of increasing women’s presence within companies on all levels (employees, managers, executive and board members) in order to change more equally the balance of power in the labour market and corporate policies, against any kind of gender discrimination. The certification is intended to narrow the gender pay gap between men and women and to monitor and raise awareness among companies, employees and consumers about Gender Diversity. The Winning Women Institute is supported by a Scientific Committee respecting standards of excellence that gathers leading players personalities in the business, university and cultural fields”. Certification is based on the “Dynamic Model Gender Rating”, administered by an international audit company.

### Validity

3 Years with possibility to renew

### Eligibility and requirements:

#### Eligibility

Any kind of company.

#### Requirements

None found online.

#### Other information

No. of applicants unavailable. In its first year (2018), 4 companies were certified: Alès Groupe, Biogen, Cameo Italia e Grenke Locazione Srl.

### Business model:

The main source of funding are the fees paid by applicants.

### Certification process, assessment, and support:

The process starts with a pre-audit, aimed at a preliminary analysis and a first assessment of gender equality with the issuing of a dedicated report; the next step is the audit, conducted by a third party and managed through the Dynamic Model Gender Rating prepared by WWI; in the event of a positive outcome, the certification is issued and can be used by the company for institutional and commercial purposes. Finally, the process also includes a communication campaign dedicated to the certification obtained by the company. The collected data for the certification are qualitative and quantitative data (unclear in what form), policy documentation.

### Criteria and Indicators used:

The Dynamic Model Gender Rating is used to analyse the status on Gender Equality in organizational contexts. It uses 4 areas of investigation:

- Career opportunities for women.
- Equal pay and HR management processes.
- Policy for the management of Gender Diversity.
- Policy for the protection of maternity.



<h1>X-AEQUO Certification of management systems for equal opportunities</h1>		2010
<b>Certification</b> <a href="http://www.ajaeurope.eu/certificazioni/aja-excellences/x-aequo-management-system-for-equal-opportunities/">http://www.ajaeurope.eu/certificazioni/aja-excellences/x-aequo-management-system-for-equal-opportunities/</a>	<b>Regional</b> <a href="http://www.ajaeurope.eu/#contatti">http://www.ajaeurope.eu/#contatti</a>	
<b>Awarding body:</b> <b>Target Audience:</b>	<b>Aja Europe</b> <b>Businesses</b>	
<b>Overall description:</b> <p>The application of the Management System and the Certification issued allows the Company to give an overview of the situation and level of implementation of Equal Opportunities within the company, build improvement plans, apply them and disseminate them internally and externally for greater efficiency, effectiveness and visibility of what has been achieved. The X-AEQUO standards are claimed to yield high added value, economic and financial benefits, and are described as fully sustainable and easy to implement and integrate with different system documentation.</p>		
<b>Validity</b> <p>3 years with annual surveillance checks, and possibility to renew.</p>		
<b>Interlinkages with other certification schemes</b> <p>It is reported that the X-AEQUO Management System can be integrated easily with the ISO 9001 Quality System. The audits are independent of ISO 9001 certification, but they can be carried out jointly in order to optimise costs.</p>		
<b>Interlinkages with national and European quality assurance mechanisms</b> <p>The certification ensures compliance with the relevant legislation on equal opportunities. In particular: compliance with the European Directive and related national applications on Equal Opportunities of men and women in Public Administration and compliance with the European Directive relating to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and jobs.</p>		
<b>Eligibility and requirements:</b>		
<b>Eligibility</b> <p>Any kind of company.</p>		
<b>Requirements</b> <p>None found online.</p>		
<b>Business model:</b> <p>All costs are covered through applicant fees. Some additional services can be requested (e.g., training course).</p>		
<b>Certification process, assessment, and support:</b> <p>Certification process. Preliminary check (on request); Certification or Main Audit check (with certificate issue); Surveillance visits to ensure proper maintenance of the system; Renewal of certification (after the period of validity of the certificate issued). At the end of each check, the company receives a clear and complete report that allows the system's performance to be continuously improved.  The kind of data collected for the assessment is not available.</p>		
<b>Criteria and Indicators used:</b> <p>The Management System includes the following main aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Responsibility of the Directorate for Equal Opportunities – analysis of the needs of the interested parties; policies for equal opportunities; action plans that guarantee equal opportunities; internal and external communication; organisation; management review;</li> <li>•Resource management – Personnel selection and management based on equal opportunities; employee involvement and empowerment; training; skills and evaluation;</li> <li>•Product/service implementation – Equal Opportunities integrated into business processes; Supply management value chain;</li> <li>•Measurement, analysis, and improvement – Measurements and monitoring; cost/benefit assessment with a view to continuous improvement; collecting data and information disaggregated by gender and system of reports; Customer satisfaction; internal audits; non-compliance management; data analysis; corrective and preventive actions.</li> </ul>		



## 7. Concluding remarks

By mapping and studying the main policy frameworks with a relevance for the CASPER project and its goal of conducting a feasibility study on a EU level certification system for gender equality targeting RPOs, we have acknowledged how HEIs and Research organizations in Europe are at the centre of complex dynamics and a series of soft reforms, which are accompanied by tensions and lively debate. The main drivers are global economic competition and the need to sustain competitiveness of the EU countries within the knowledge economy, whereas research organizations and academia play a crucial role in knowledge production, share, and transfer: to this respect, common EU frameworks and standards for qualifications, recruitment, management of research and HEI institutions and systems are developed and monitored through consultative and soft policies methods. This happens in parallel with calls to set up increased transparency and openness towards society and the economy at large. Discourses on quality and excellence of research and education are central to argue and sustain different visions of the abovementioned processes, although they are also subject to a multiplicity of definitions.

We have spotlighted how, at present, **two traditionally separate institutional policy frameworks and structures, Bologna Process and EHEA on one side and ERA on the other, are being increasingly coordinated.**

Diversity, inclusion, gender equality, play an important part in such policies and the challenges of inequality and discrimination are also framed in multiple ways: gender equality is more explicitly and prominently a priority within ERA, although it plays a role within the Bologna process and EHEA as well, as a component of the so called ‘social dimension’.

Several **‘convergence’ dynamics** are observed that will enable CASPER scenarios to widely resonate with the policy reforms that Universities and Research Organizations are facing nowadays.

For this to happen, indicators and processes that will be devised for the CASPER certification systems will have to consider (and mainstream a gender perspective into) those which are shaping the two abovementioned main policies. It will also be important to foresee suitable mechanisms to link CASPER with existing funding programmes, for research and HEI H2020 in particular, in order to further incentivize institutions to certify their commitment and progress in gender equality.

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*Several ‘convergence’ dynamics are observed that will enable CASPER scenarios to widely resonate with the policy reforms that Universities and Research Organizations are facing nowadays.*

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**As far as EHEA is concerned, gender equality is valued as a component of the so called ‘social dimension’** and the policy goal of increasing enrollment, retention and attainment levels of students of all backgrounds: as several gender unbalances and horizontal segregation affect those, this points at the opportunity of including Teaching and Services to Students (recruitment, counselling, etc.) as areas to be assessed via gender and intersectionality indicators within CASPER certification/awarding process.



CASPER should explore the integration of a gender dimension in teaching methods and practices which is only marginally covered by existing Certification schemes on gender in research despite its key role in the H2020 Projects on structural change.

**EHEA is already promoting coordinated internal quality assurance processes in HEIs** sustained by the ESG standards and encourages them to undergo to external QA as well for increased transparency and accountability. It would therefore be beneficial if CASPER could take this into account and further explore possibilities for mainstreaming gender within already existing internal QA processes. Current practices suggested by ESG points at the opportunity to set up differentiate procedures/processes and allow greater flexibility in cases where a sound internal monitoring of gender equality policies is in place, as well as to the inclusion of different stakeholders in the assessment process preliminary to certification, last but not least students.

It is worth underlining how some of the directions showed by the study of the Bologna Process and EHEA converge with the 'Opportunities for CASPER' emerging from the first preliminary mapping of the main Certification and Awarding Schemes: most CAS which are open to HEIs do not have indicators either on the diversity of the student population; or on the integration of gender analysis in research or in teaching content. Furthermore, none of the awarding institutions' websites which were studied had immediately accessible and transparent information regarding the internal processes and mechanisms to ensure the quality of the CAS, among which was the complaints and appeal procedure.

These aspects should be taken into careful consideration for CASPER, not only to enhance the overall quality of the certification scenarios to propose, but to ensure a competitive advantage towards the existing CAS which focus on research and Higher Education Institutions.

**With regards to ERA policy frameworks**, CASPER can rely on the already **highlighted prominence of gender equality set as one of its six priorities**, embedded into monitoring mechanisms at the EU and MS levels via the ERA National Action Plans. **There is solid work provided by the gender communities within the ERA institutional framework**, namely the ERAC SWG as well as the specific research work done within the GENDERACTION H2020 project to critically assess the implementation of ERA policies under the different priorities: this makes available a rich body of knowledge and a set of gender sensitive indicators that will be of enormous use to shape CASPER scenarios, both in terms of arguments and discursive hooks to be used, and to define the areas and dimensions to be subject to assessment within the certification system. A detailed analysis of all the ERA priorities is presented in chapter 3.

Furthermore, as stressed in both Chapters 3 and 6, **ERA priority on Human Resources and mobility is of strategic relevance** because the policy tool in use for streamlining Human resources management in research across the EU is a widespread certification systems promoted and managed by the EC itself, namely the HRS4R. We have found how recently a report from the H2020 Gearing Roles project has proposed to strengthen the gender dimension of this programme by making its operational tools gender sensitive; moreover, there is also a current dialogue between the ERAC SW on Human resources and mobility and the SWG on the same topic. All of this suggests focusing one of the CASPER scenarios on the integration with HRS4R.

On a similar note and as a result of our research on ERA and the SWG, also confirmed by preliminary results from the ongoing mapping in national languages, it has emerged how there is interest from Ministries of Research in several countries to explore the feasibility of using the Athena SWAN model: a recommendation stemming from this study is therefore to consider having another CASPER scenario devoted to explore the feasibility of such an option.



**Exploring the transition from Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe** has been crucial to focus the attention on the importance of the mechanisms for connecting CASPER with the new research funding programme to incentivize RPOs to enter the certification process. Although the first Horizon Europe Work Programme is still under negotiations, we have underlined how while the continuation of a dedicated funding line to institutional change project is not confirmed yet, **the possibility to require a Gender Equality Plan to facilitate access funds from Horizon Europe applicants is becoming more and more concrete** (European Commission, 2020b). Indeed, if thoroughly embedded into the evaluation process and requested at the institutional level, it could trigger substantial efforts to achieve institutional change.

Such a scenario would lead to an increased demand from Universities and RPOs towards support services/tools enabling them to design and implement GEPs and an EU certification programme jointly with gender trainings could become crucial mechanisms to prevent ‘bureaucratic’ responses to such incentives to set up gender equality measures at the institutional level.

Crosscutting to both ERA and the new European Strategy on Gender Equality, and also recalled in EHEA, **we found two policy discourses that are highly relevant for CASPER scenarios**: intersectional approaches, and the interconnections and synergies between Research Organizations, and HEIs and their entrepreneurial, civic milieus.

Explored within scholarly debates in feminist and gender studies since many years already, the need to operationalize an **intersectional approach** is finally gaining momentum also in research and HEIs. This was found to be an emerging trend from policy documents and reports released by the ERAC SWG, the GENDER ACTION Project, confirmed by the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, compatible with the inclusiveness and diversity discourses prevailing within EHEA. This clearly points to the need for CASPER to adopt an intersectional approach as in the current scenario, the proposal for a European gender equality certification sticking to binary definitions of gender would most probably become obsolete.

The second transversal policy discourse is the **“engaged and entrepreneurial university” framework** promoted within EHEA and convergent with the Open Innovation one within ERA priority 5, pointing at the importance of strengthening synergies and collaborations between RPOs, HEIs and business sectors, public administration and governing bodies, civil society at large. Within CASPER this could be taken into consideration in different ways, for example by testing the relevance of specific gender-sensitive indicators related to technology transfer and so called ‘Third Mission’ activities to be integrated into the designed certification schemes, but also stretching the traditional definitions of civil society/innovation ecosystems to include feminist and gender expert organizations.

Positioning CASPER in the current policy scenarios is a sensitive endeavor: critical awareness of broad, structural power dynamics underlying current policy reforms and how those could end up coopting the gender equality agenda can go hand in hand with the more pragmatic capacity to exploit the existing windows of opportunities they might open, to sustain transformative gender equality practices in the long run (Marx Ferree & Zippel, 2015; Kunz 2016). Indeed, how to concretely devise a certification system that will make it possible to strike a balance between the two aspects, is a question that the CASPER consortium will have to confront with during all the forthcoming project steps.



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