



D6.6 SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections



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SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections

This deliverable presents SPEAR's policy recommendations for EU-level policy makers and university alliances and networks – stakeholders with a deep and wide range of influence. As we present these from the perspective of gender equality practice at universities and research performing organisations, we put these recommendations forward as a set of reflections on four clustered themes highly relevant for the daily practice of gender equality consultants, experts and scholars. Our intention is to strengthen and lend our support to already ongoing and important developments in the political arena in EU concerning inclusive gender equality.

The timely and important discussions at SPEAR's final conference pointed to an intimate link between inclusive gender equality and a wider democratic agenda. In this spirit, these recommendations are presented in acknowledgement of an urgent need for a strong and resilient advocacy and a concerted capacity to foster and provide practice- and research-based input.

Gender equality work in Academia is multifaceted and complex and requires a holistic approach and a honed reflective capacity. In respect of this reason, we have called our recommendations:

SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections

The cycle comprises the following four themes, each presented as a separate document:

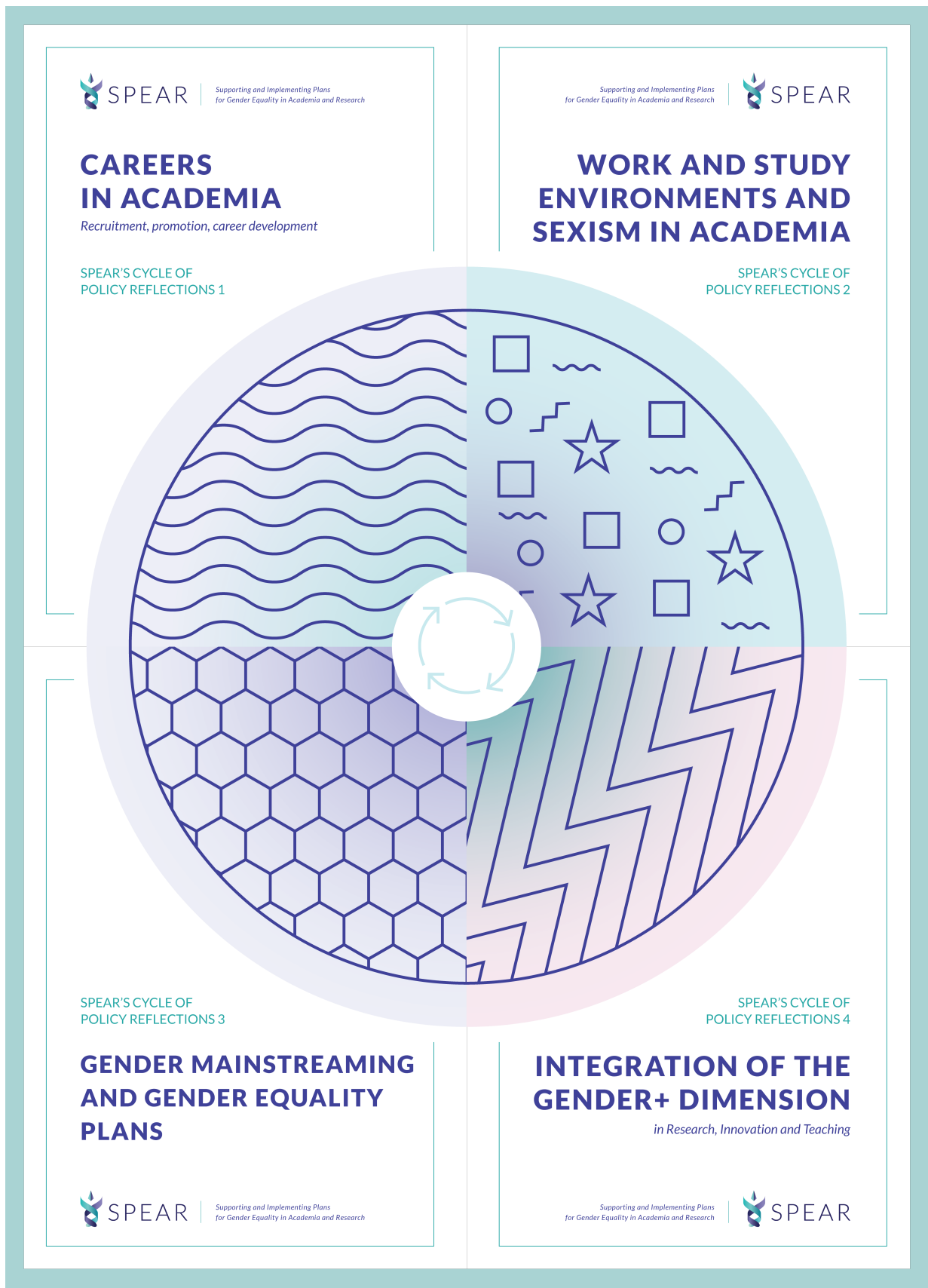
- 1. Careers in Academia: Recruitment, promotion, career development**
- 2. Work and study environments and sexism in Academia**
- 3. Gender mainstreaming and Gender Equality Plans**
- 4. Integration of the Gender+ Dimension in research, innovation and teaching**

The full cycle will be promoted to a number of important EU-level policy makers, University networks and alliances, through direct personal contact by the entire consortium, as well as through mails to our sister projects and wider gender equality networks. The promotion campaign will start with a press release on SPEAR's collected output, in the beginning of May 2023. In addition to mail-contact, a comprehensive social media campaign will run from the end of April and through May 2023, and all materials will be published and available on SPEAR's website: www.gender-spear.eu from the end of April 2023.

Here we have collected the entire cycle, consisting of four separate documents, along with the social media visuals developed explicitly for communication purposes.



SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections – visuals





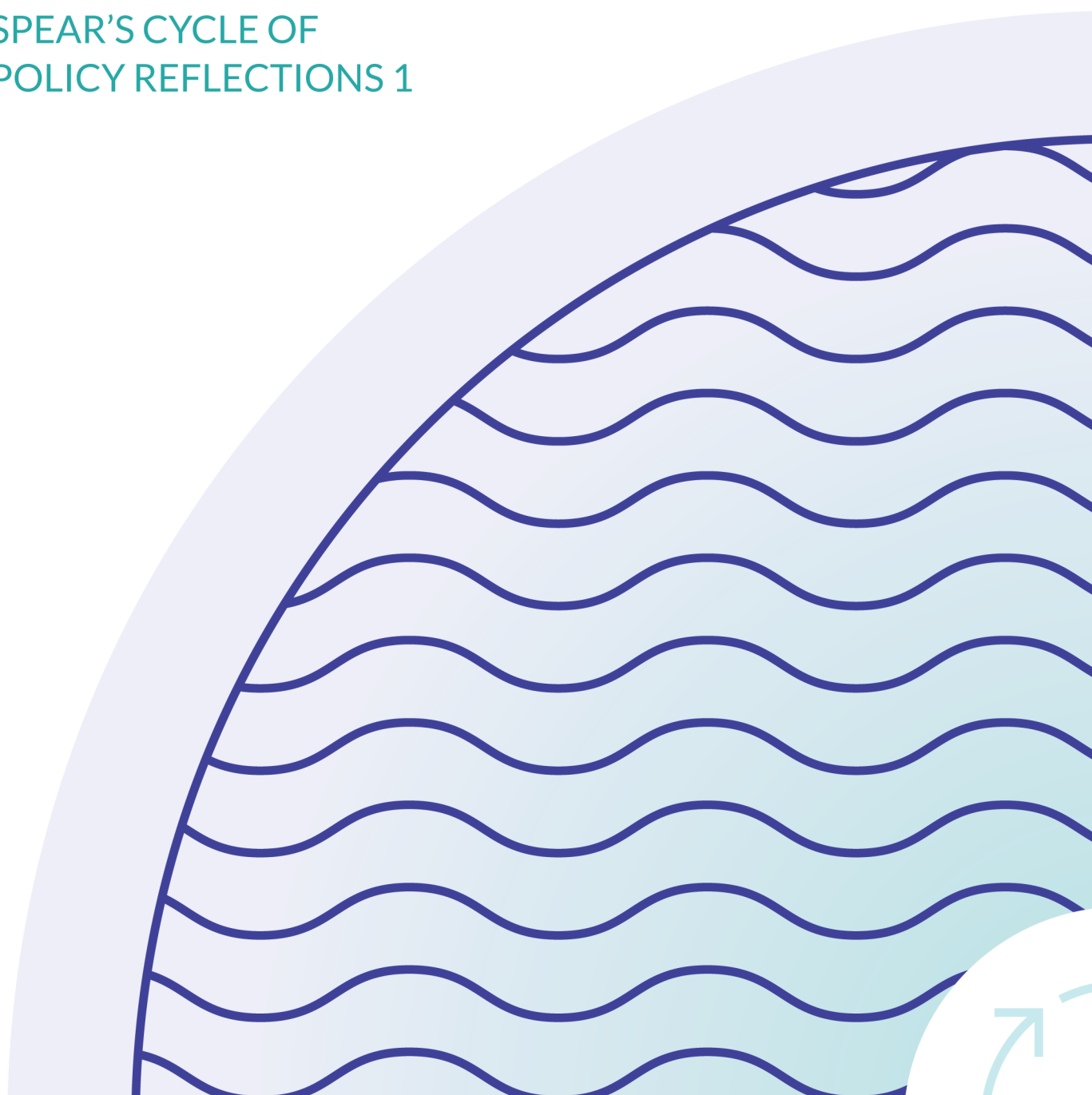
SPEAR

Supporting and Implementing Plans
for Gender Equality in Academia and Research

CAREERS IN ACADEMIA

Recruitment, promotion, career development

SPEAR'S CYCLE OF
POLICY REFLECTIONS 1



CAREERS IN ACADEMIA: RECRUITMENT, PROMOTION, CAREER DEVELOPMENT

WHAT

Given the persistent gender inequality and loss of talent in Academia, a revision of the concept of academic excellence to align with gender equality and inclusiveness is required. This in turn calls for clear criteria for assessment of research applied in selection processes in Academia; fair, systematic and transparent decision-making processes; explicit ways to sponsor and ensure access to and equality in career enhancing activities; conducive employment conditions and gender equal salary at all career levels; and an academic culture which explicitly values inclusion and equality, as well as reflection, diverse contributions, collaboration and creativity.

WHY

Recruitment, promotion and career development are central activities and concerns in Academia and are increasingly seen as key for a thriving, creative work force. These activities draw on concepts of academic excellence.

Several agendas, policies and initiatives emphasise principles that see excellence as closely coupled with inclusiveness, intersectionality and gender equality in Academia. This counts a) the European Union (EU) core value of inclusive gender equality; b) the European Research Area (ERA) objectives ERA3 (research assessment), ERA4 (research careers) and ERA5 (inclusive gender equality); c) the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA); d) the Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA); e) the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) No 5 (gender equality) and No 8 (decent work and economic growth); f) Gendered Innovations; as well as g) policy briefs, recommendations and resources put forward by organizations, networks and associations.

Without clear criteria and fairness, nor systematic approaches, and without transparency in recruitment and promotion, assessment and selection risk being biased and reproducing existing inequalities. Bias is the antithesis of excellence: bias reduces the possibility for bringing in vital new perspectives and developing surprising new talent, creativity and innovation.

She Figures 2021 shows that despite general – if slow – improvements and despite concerted policies and efforts, women are still under-represented in most STEM fields and gender imbalance persists in higher academic positions in all scientific disciplines. The higher drop-out of women relative to men at every career step in Academia is a serious brain-drain and depletion of ideas that could make important contributions to research, innovation and education. This has various negative and self-reinforcing impacts that perpetuate inequality and non-inclusive cultures, including a lack of role-models to inspire people who do not conform to prevailing norms to pursue academic careers, the prevailing uneven gender balance and lack of diversity in decision-making and power positions, a skewed allocation of research funding and resources, widespread use of precarious contracts and persistent gender pay gaps.

SPEAR supports a gender+ understanding of inclusiveness, intersectionality and equality, i.e., an intersectional understanding where gender is the primary axis of intervention, extended to address other, simultaneously intersecting dimensions, such as nationality, ethnicity, race, class, age, sexuality, dis/ability, etc. (Verloo, M. (Ed.) (2018), *Varieties of Opposition to Gender Equality in Europe*. New York, USA: Routledge; EU DG for R&I (2022): *Approaches to Inclusive Gender Equality in Research and Innovation*).

HOW

The following presents what SPEAR considers to be useful actions at EU level, for instance under the auspices of networks, alliances and initiatives such as the **European University Alliance (EUA)**, **Science Europe** and **EQUINET**, to strengthen the sector's concerted efforts for an inclusive and equal European Academia, here through focusing on academic careers.

01

Support research assessment reform to improve ways in which scholarly research is evaluated with more qualitative evaluation – the promotion of DORA and CoARA are significant steps in this direction.

02

Support, implement and promote revision of recruitment, promotion and assessment processes to boost transparency and bias mitigation, such as systematic unconscious bias observation of assessment and selection procedures. This entails production and dissemination of good practice examples; guidance for assessment with clear instructions and criteria; and standards for giving merit to gender equality, diversity and inclusion involvement and efforts.

03

Contribute to close the gender pay and pension gap through provision of systematic data, analyses and evaluation of gender pay and pension gaps, source of funding (third party and internal funds), advancement processes and turnover time, applied salary criteria and salary revision processes – from organisational level up.

04

Make academic positions (more) attractive through showcasing how it is possible to reform the use of precarious contracts and dependency on seniors, for instance through revising grant schemes to promote the autonomy of early career researchers. Systematise care support facilities; possibilities for mobility schemes; flexibility; career support, mentoring and sponsorship for all career levels.

05

Integrate GE+ and intersectionality principles into supranational recognition and merit schemes, such as **HRS4R**, that take all aspects of academic careers into account – so that, in addition to research, also teaching, administration and academic citizenship activities are included. This could build on the scenarios developed by the CASPER project, with its focus specifically on gender.

06

Establish (or develop) a regular forum at EU level for practitioners and important stakeholders and gatekeepers that extends beyond project events, such as the new EU Award for Gender Equality Champions. This type of event could offer exchange of updates on important policy developments and discussion and qualification of good practice examples and monitoring.

SPEAR aims to bring about institutional change in research performing organizations by implementing gender equality plans. Our vision is a European Academia, where equality, diversity and inclusion is daily practice.

We see a need for a close connection between daily practices and the political debate and legislative processes to emphasize knowledge- and research-based arguments, to strengthen democratic values and to counter the consequences of antidemocratic movements.

SPEAR covers a diversity of backgrounds and national and institutional contexts – an asset for the quality of our endeavours. As gender equality experts, scholars and practitioners we know the value of community and ongoing support for effective implementation. Our unique methodology for learning and support inspires our practice and reflective capacity and empowers our organisations to act. For the wider community, our practice-based tools and resources are openly accessible.

Empowering (e)quality

From the perspective of our research-based practice, we bear witness to the necessity of holistic and sustained approaches, policies and frameworks for bringing about required structural change. This involves concerted, explicit and coordinated efforts to counter anti-gender tendencies with open eyes and responsible action.

SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections is our contribution to important developments on policy level in EU – thus putting forward our practitioners' voice, experiences, and expertise to reinforce and support these developments.

Reflecting,
Spearpoints shine.
Fiercely, fireflies shimmer
In search of spirit, soul, and light.

A quest – not for words, but action
For fair, universal, constant,
Complex, enduring,
Rights.

SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections covers four interconnected topics in support of sustainable and inclusive Gender Equality in European Academia, anno 2023:

- 01 Careers in Academia: Recruitment, promotion, career development**
- 02 Work- and study environment and sexism in Academia
- 03 Gender mainstreaming and Gender Equality Plans
- 04 Integration of the Gender+ Dimension in research, innovation and teaching

SPEAR Consortium: University of Southern Denmark | Uppsala University | RWTH Aachen University | Europa Media | Joanneum Research | Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski | Vilnius University | Vytauto Magnus University | NOVA University Lisbon | University of Rijeka | International Business School, Botevgrad

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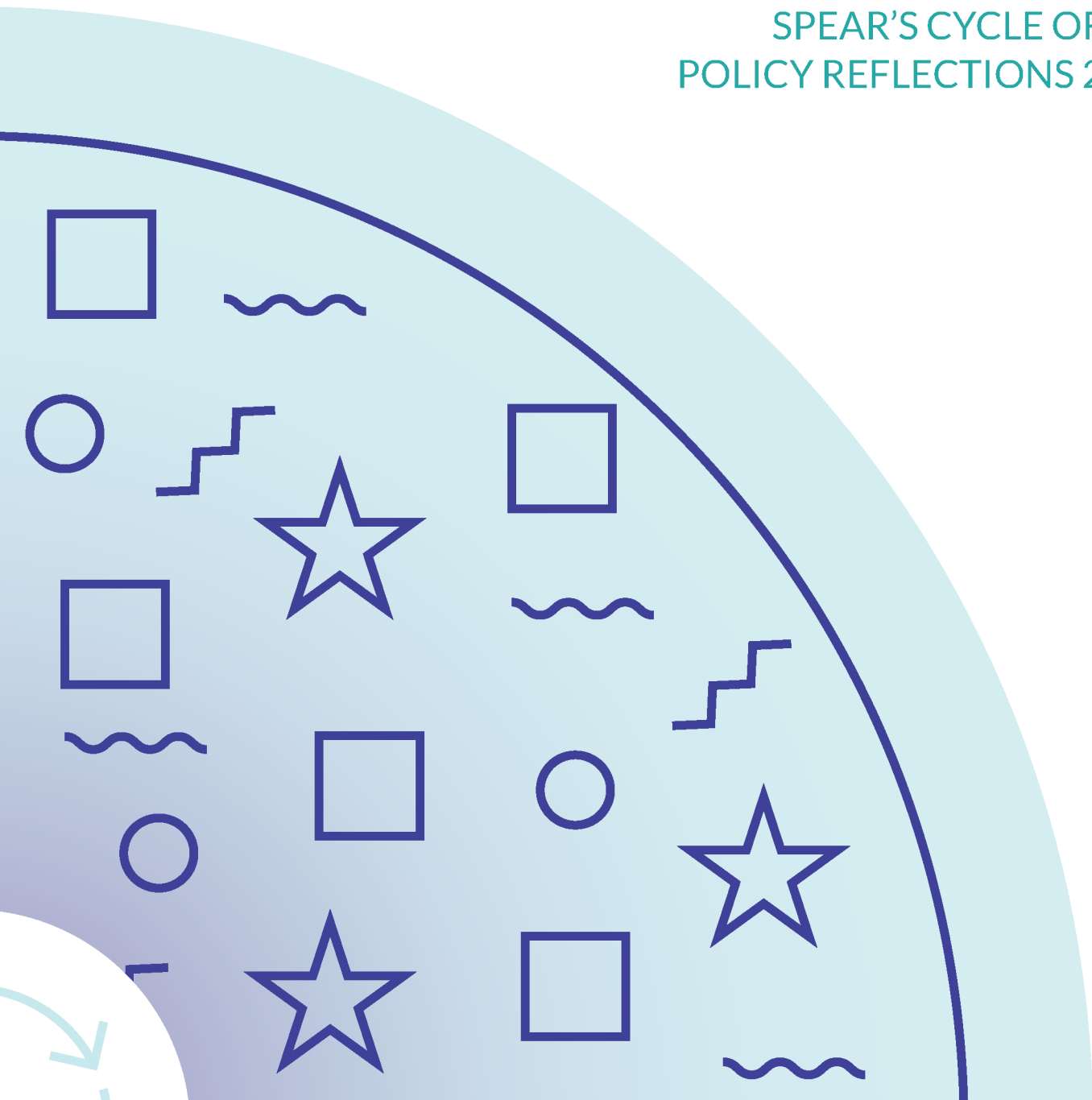
Supporting and Implementing Plans
for Gender Equality in Academia and Research



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WORK AND STUDY ENVIRONMENTS AND SEXISM IN ACADEMIA

SPEAR'S CYCLE OF
POLICY REFLECTIONS 2



WORK AND STUDY ENVIRONMENTS AND SEXISM IN ACADEMIA

WHAT

A growing body of evidence shows a correlation between poor work and study environments in Academia and threats to creative output of high quality on the one hand, and the prevalence of sexist, even misogynistic, behaviour and harassment on the other. Countering sexism is increasingly seen as a key to mitigate brain-drain, exclusion and inequalities.

SPEAR calls for countering sexism in recognition of the connections between quality, innovative environments and inclusive equality, and therefore SPEAR advocates for legislation, policies and resources that strive for a safe, respectful, inclusive and creative Academia.

WHY

As a spearhead democratic institution, Academia holds important ethical imperatives of responsibility for the quality and standards of education and research as well as towards staff, students and surrounding communities. These imperatives are embraced through open and fair science, systematic research assessment, social and ethical responsibility, research integrity and sustainability.

However, Academia is inherently competitive and characterised by high demands, unclear expectations, harsh selection processes, few and powerful gatekeepers in long career trajectories, complex power relations and interdependencies, precarious affiliations, individualisation and blurring of personal and professional domains. These traits together comprise a rich foundation for hostile, chilly and sexist environments – which ultimately lead to unsafe and undemocratic institutions.

Academia is undergoing increasing diversification and internationalisation of student and staff populations. The greater the diversity – cultural, religious, socio-economic, gender, disciplinary, etc. – the larger the need for effective intersectional understanding and action. Academia possesses the scientific and intellectual strength to bring mechanisms that underlie inequality and sexism to light and to develop effective research-based countermeasures and support systems. Academia has the capacity and obligation to apply this to its own environments – and to contribute with awareness raising, enlightenment and debate beyond Academia.

For too long, Academia has shied away from this challenge. Taking on the responsibility of guaranteeing fair and transparent case handling, providing support for and by leaders and administrators, delivering training (for staff and leaders) and raising awareness about sexism and anti-discrimination, would counter not only sexism but also other inequality issues in work and study environments and contribute to upholding the democratic framework.

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HOW

The following presents what SPEAR considers to be useful actions at European level, for instance under the auspices of **the European University Alliance (EUA), the Sub-Group to the ERA Forum on ERA Action 5 of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022–2024, Inclusive Gender Equality in the ERA (ERA 5 Sub-Group), the United Nations Committee on the Elimination and Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the UniSAFE project**, to strengthen the sector's concerted efforts for an inclusive and equal European Academia, here through focusing on work and study environments and sexism.

01

Create, promote and implement a code of ethics in coordination with mandated EU level equality bodies and networks, such as the ERA 5 Sub-Group and EQUINET, and with policy and strategy documents currently under way.

02

Establish an EU level taskforce, for instance in affiliation with the ERA 5 Sub-Group, charged with defining wider measures for countering the framework conditions that foster sexist environments, such as dependency structures between early career researchers in precarious positions in relation to senior researchers, gatekeepers, mentors and supervisors. This could be done through, for instance, critical revision of funding schemes, grant sizes, objectives and beneficiaries, publications, research design and employment contracts.

03

Develop a recurring system for national prevalence data on sexism in Academia either in parallel or integrated with She Figures – inspiration can be found in the UNISAFE project, the 2021–2022 Swedish National study on gender-based violence in academia as well as the Lund University TELLUS project.

04

Develop and financially support supranational resources, so that they can be continuously coordinated and updated in aid of the adoption of recommendations put forward by, for instance, UniSAFE in their first policy brief and by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union in their Call for Action to End Gender-Based Violence: 'Working towards safe and respectful higher education and research for all'. This could include support, infrastructure, bystander training, available resources and data, tools, training, etc. in liaison with existing or new centres – for instance modelled on the European IP Helpdesk.

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We see a need for a close connection between daily practices and the political debate and legislative processes to emphasize knowledge- and research-based arguments, to strengthen democratic values and to counter the consequences of antidemocratic movements.

SPEAR covers a diversity of backgrounds and national and institutional contexts – an asset for the quality of our endeavours. As gender equality experts, scholars and practitioners we know the value of community and ongoing support for effective implementation. Our unique methodology for learning and support inspires our practice and reflective capacity and empowers our organisations to act. For the wider community, our practice-based tools and resources are open and accessible.

Empowering (e)quality

From the perspective of our research-based practice, we bear witness to the necessity of holistic and sustained approaches, policies and frameworks for bringing about required structural change. This involves concerted, explicit and coordinated efforts to counter anti-gender tendencies with open eyes and responsible action.

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- 01 Careers in Academia: Recruitment, promotion, career development
- 02 **Work- and study environment and sexism in Academia**
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- 04 Integration of the Gender+ Dimension in research, innovation and teaching

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SPEAR'S CYCLE OF
POLICY REFLECTIONS 3

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND GENDER EQUALITY PLANS



SPEAR

*Supporting and Implementing Plans
for Gender Equality in Academia and Research*

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

WHAT

Inclusive gender equality (GE+) is vital for higher education and other research organisations if we are to meet current and future challenges in comprehensive, competitive, fair, responsible and ethical ways. But GE+ does not happen without clear and operable requirements and objectives.

The European Union (EU) is a standard-bearer in setting such objectives: the visionary 2020–2025 Gender Equality (GE) strategy, the Gender Equality Priority in the European Research Area (ERA), the definition of gender equality as a core democratic value and the Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan (GEP) requirement all contribute to providing the framework and incentive for structures, approaches and instruments towards inclusive gender equality in European Academia.

WHY

Working for and promoting GE+ in the face of obstacles, anti-democratic resistance, power structures, biases and inequality regimes is an ambitious undertaking. Backsliding and reversal of positive developments are widespread. Therefore, GE work needs firm anchors. GE processes, GE mainstreaming and GEPs are indispensable as models for actions and measures, mainstreaming, monitoring and quality assurance of GE+ efforts.

For such anchors to be effective, policies, frameworks, measures and initiatives must be holistic, sustainable, context specific, research-based and multifaceted. Long-lasting initiatives must target institutional structures and cultural practices simultaneously. This includes revising processes and outcomes in administrative procedures and practices (i.e., gender mainstreaming), such as management, Human Resources (HR), finances and legal. For Academia, also research, innovation and teaching must undergo gender mainstreaming. Thorough involvement of stakeholders in developing and disseminating equality-promoting measures and practices is required – also to minimise resistance.

Clear objectives and requirements at supranational level are essential for individual institutions to refer to, as well as collect high-quality data and monitor progress against. Because of the complexity of integrating GE+ with prevailing values, strategies and daily practices, it is necessary that gender mainstreaming takes specific contexts and framework conditions into account. This requires GE+ expert resources to drive, analyse and adjust measures to bring about impact – which in turn requires qualified support and resources for GE+ agents.

For practitioners on the ground, it is vital that the drive for improvements and continuous clarification of what constitutes adequate and effective GE+ measures is kept up. Therefore, SPEAR calls for sharpening Horizon Europe's GEP requirement.

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01

Ensure critical infrastructure at EU level by embedding essential functions, bodies and resources that may provide continuity in the provision and coordination of state-of-the-art knowledge, resources and support as well as promote success stories and facilitate networks and communities of practice, such as the Centre of Excellence for Inclusive Gender Equality INSPIRE and the ERA 5 Sub-Group.

02

Promote collaboration and coordination between institutions and initiatives that advocate for GE+, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, ethics, responsible research, sustainability, etc. This will benefit from collaboration and coordination with institutions that provide data and statistics at international and national levels to facilitate gender mainstreaming, coordination and maximal impact in the provision of data and other resources. **This will also contribute to necessary and resilient advocacy and a concerted capacity to foster and provide research-based knowledge and qualified input to the political debate.**

03

Develop the GEP requirements further by upgrading the current five recommended content areas in two ways:

- a. supplementing with two additional content categories: *Gender Budgeting* and *GE+ Competencies for Management*, and
- b. making it a requirement that at least three of these categories are addressed explicitly in institutional GEPs.

04

Implement GE(P) audits and monitoring mechanisms capable of identifying GE measures and GEPs that bring about deep structural change in contrast to pro-forma documents with limited structural impact. These mechanisms could in turn benefit from being independently monitored and evaluated to balance and compare such activities across framework conditions and contexts.

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SPEAR'S CYCLE OF
POLICY REFLECTIONS 4

INTEGRATION OF THE GENDER+ DIMENSION

in Research, Innovation and Teaching

Supporting and Implementing Plans
for Gender Equality in Academia and Research



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INTEGRATION OF THE GENDER+ DIMENSION IN RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND TEACHING

WHAT

Making gender and sex analysis integral to research, innovation and teaching content is a powerful way to include a broad range of perspectives and to strive for innovative results of high quality, as well as sound, safe and relevant outcomes and impact.

For teaching, the integration of the gender+ dimension applies to designing teaching content – topics, examples, materials, methods – and carrying out bias-aware practices in interactions, assignments and assessment.

WHY

The omission of the gender+ dimension in research, innovation and teaching leads to incomplete, costly and detrimental outcomes. This is increasingly recognised as disadvantageous for output, for economic success and competitiveness, and for impact on entire populations in addition to being a contributing factor to perpetuate existing inequalities. Research and innovation processes and outcomes influence day-to-day practicalities and thus have widespread daily impact on peoples' lives, not least in areas such as medicine, safety equipment, traffic, economic capacity and access to education.

Integrating an inclusive gender dimension is a pathway to excellence and is vital for meeting the Grand Challenges, such as the sustainability and New Green Deal agendas. The integration of the gender+ dimension is, moreover, a strong lever in overcoming stereotypes and systemic inequalities.

The need for gender and sex analysis in research, innovation and teaching should be obvious – but too often it is not even on the radar. Policies, incentives, solid evidence, research-based practical support and continual promotion and dissemination of good examples and effects are required, if practices are to be sustainably changed.

The European Union (EU) paves the way by including gender dimension in research content as a ranking criterion for Horizon Europe funding. Incentives such as gender criteria for funding and resource allocation are effective and are required on all strategic levels: internationally (as with Horizon Europe), nationally (e.g., funding bodies) and at universities (e.g., internal funding and resource allocation). However, they must be supplemented with solid evidence, provision of research-based support and continual promotion to make a positive difference.

HOW

The following presents what SPEAR considers to be useful actions at EU level, for instance under the auspices of **the European University Alliance (EUA), the Sub-Group to the ERA Forum on ERA Action 5 of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022–2024 (ERA 5 Sub-Group), Inclusive Gender Equality in the ERA, the European Centre of Excellence on Inclusive Gender Equality in Research & Innovation INSPIRE and the GENDERACTIONplus project**, to strengthen the sector's concerted efforts for an inclusive and equal European Academia, here through focusing on the integration of the gender+ dimension in research, innovation and teaching.

01

Develop and promote frameworks, guidelines and tools to integrate the gender+ dimension in both research and curricula – and to couple this with **developing systematic monitoring** of this integration, to facilitate and support the adoption of these practices, e.g., at funders' and university levels.

02

Establish an EU support function to provide research-based training and cases on how to include the gender+ dimension in teaching and research and to promote and raise awareness about gender+ as a dimension of excellence. Places to start – possibly as funding schemes – could be:

- a. develop tools, and make available for researchers and teachers, on how to apply gender+ perspectives to the subject and integrate this in research practices and teaching interactions;
- b. establish interdisciplinary networks and communities of practice to promote mutual understanding between different scientific disciplines, support exchange of experiences and develop and qualify practices; and
- c. develop solid argumentation to foster understanding of why and how the gender+ dimension in research, innovation and teaching is necessary and compatible with academic freedom and excellence.

03

Strengthen and promote research that successfully integrates the gender+ dimension, in alignment with the deliverables of the ERA policy framework (ERA 5: develop principles for the integration and evaluation of the gender perspective in research and innovation content). Places to start could be:

- a. add evaluation points in Horizon Europe's funding evaluation to be awarded to research projects that successfully integrate the gender+ dimension; monitor their long-term impact; require guidance and training for applicants and reviewers on how to evaluate and monitor the integration of gender+ dimension and sex and gender analysis; and
- b. revise conference practices: make EU funding for conferences contingent on the gender+ dimension being considered in at least one stream; host a bi yearly conference on science with a gender+ dimension – and thus showcase the impact of gender in Horizon Europe.

04

Coordinate standards, tools, evaluation practices and guidelines with responsible bodies for editorial politics and policies at EU level in order to promote the integration of gender+ dimension in published research and in this way strengthen the integration of the gender+ dimension in research, innovation and teaching.

SPEAR aims to bring about institutional change in research performing organizations by implementing gender equality plans. Our vision is a European Academia, where equality, diversity and inclusion is daily practice.

We see a need for a close connection between daily practices and the political debate and legislative processes to emphasize knowledge- and research-based arguments, to strengthen democratic values and to counter the consequences of antidemocratic movements.

SPEAR covers a diversity of backgrounds and national and institutional contexts – an asset for the quality of our endeavours. As gender equality experts, scholars and practitioners we know the value of community and ongoing support for effective implementation. Our unique methodology for learning and support inspires our practice and reflective capacity and empowers our organisations to act. For the wider community, our practice-based tools and resources are open and accessible.

Empowering (e)quality

From the perspective of our research-based practice, we bear witness to the necessity of holistic and sustained approaches, policies and frameworks for bringing about required structural change. This involves concerted, explicit and coordinated efforts to counter anti-gender tendencies with open eyes and responsible action.

SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections is our contribution to important developments on policy level in EU – thus putting forward our practitioners' voice, experiences, and expertise to reinforce and support these developments.

Reflecting,
Spearpoints shine.
Fiercely, fireflies shimmer
In search of spirit, soul, and light.

A quest – not for words, but action
For fair, universal, constant,
Complex, enduring,
Rights.

SPEAR's Cycle of Policy Reflections covers four interconnected topics in support of sustainable and inclusive Gender Equality in European Academia, anno 2023:

- 01 Careers in Academia: Recruitment, promotion, career development
- 02 Work- and study environment and sexism in Academia
- 03 Gender mainstreaming and Gender Equality Plans
- 04 Integration of the Gender+ Dimension in research, innovation and teaching**

SPEAR Consortium: University of Southern Denmark | Uppsala University | RWTH Aachen University | Europa Media | Joanneum Research | Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski | Vilnius University | Vytauto Magnus University | NOVA University Lisbon | University of Rijeka | International Business School, Botevgrad

Learn more and find resources here: www.gender-spear.eu

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