

ERAC 1202/21

NOTE

From: ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation
To: ERAC Delegations

Subject: Report by the ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation on
Gender Equality Plans as a catalyst for change

Delegations will find attached the report by the ERAC SWG on Gender in Research and Innovation on "Gender Equality Plans as a catalyst for change".

GENDER EQUALITY PLANS AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation



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ERAC is a strategic policy advisory committee whose principal mission is to provide timely strategic input to the Council, the Commission and Member States on the ongoing implementation of the ERA in Member States and Associated Countries and on other strategic research and innovation policy issues.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been drafted by the SWG GRI Taskforce on Gender Equality Plans with the support of external experts. It addresses the policy instrument of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and presents the main findings of a survey carried out by the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI) among its members to assess the adoption of GEPs by Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) and to identify the needs related to the implementation of GEPs at the national level.

Based on the responses, the report identifies the following eight main challenges: 1) Building political consensus to achieve substantive change through GEPs; 2) Policy coordination to build a common definition of a GEP requirement; 3) Monitoring and evaluation of GEP implementation; 4) Uptake of GEPs by RPOs at the national level; 5) Mobilising support and resources to build capacities at the national level; 6) Involvement of the private sector; 7) Knowledge development, capacity building and mutual learning at the EU level; 8) Inclusiveness with a special focus on intersectionality. To these challenges, SWG GRI presents eleven recommendations to the Commission Member States, and Associated Countries.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Associated Countries
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ERA	European Research Area
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
MS	Member States
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
R&I	Research and Innovation
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
SWG GRI	Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation

INTRODUCTION

This report has been drafted by the SWG GRI Taskforce on Gender Equality Plans with the support of external experts.¹ It addresses the policy instrument of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) and presents the main findings of a survey carried out by the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI) among its members to **assess the adoption of GEPs by Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) and to identify the needs related to the implementation of GEPs at the national level**. Based on the responses, the report identifies the main challenges and presents recommendations to the Commission and Member States.

The SWG GRI underlines that in some instances, **significant progress has been made at the national level to support gender equality in Research and Innovation (R&I) with concrete measures and actions other than a legal or policy requirement to adopt a GEP**.

The SWG GRI stresses that the absence of a GEP requirement in a country is not an indicator of quality or absence of activity. In some instances, progress has been achieved through softer measures or more bottom-up approaches, which may be related to differences between countries and the socio-cultural factors that affect gender equality policy design. In others, the objective at the national level is to mainstream gender equality concerns into more broadly defined institutional developmental documents rather than having a dedicated document focused only on a gender equality plan. To this end, the report presents promising developments in European countries that do not have a GEP requirement in place but indicate a broad alignment in the policy approach aimed at supporting institutional changes in Research Performing and Research Funding Organisations.

The SWG GRI further notes that the adoption of a policy or strategy does not automatically mean an implementation whereby institutional changes are certain to be achieved. In some countries, the GEP requirement does contain a robust quality assurance feature. To this end, the issue of the **monitoring and evaluation of GEP implementation** shall be a crucial issue to be tackled in the new ERA, including the Horizon Europe requirement, possibly in relation to the potential introduction of a gender equality certification scheme.

To conclude, given the current policy development (in particular the new eligibility requirement of a GEP for Horizon Europe applicants as of 2022), it is of utmost importance to advance policy dialogue and coordination on issues related to GEPs, in particular the definition of a GEP and building a political consensus around the GEP definition, the monitoring of the uptake of GEPs in national R&I systems, and the monitoring and evaluation of GEP impact as well as capacity building and continued mutual learning and exchange at the policy level.

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POLICY BACKGROUND

Gender equality is one of Europe's core values. Since 2012 gender equality and gender mainstreaming have been one of the ERA priorities (COM(2012) 392; 17649/12), covering the three ERA objectives for gender equality: a gender balance in research teams, a gender balance in decision making and the gender dimension in research.

Promoting institutional change through GEPs is today the dominant policy instrument to achieve long-term, sustainable advancement toward gender equality in Research and Innovation. In 2012 the Expert Group on Structural Change set up by the Commission delivered its recommendations, among which gender equality plans played a key role in the effort to achieve sustainable change (European Commission 2012). The 2015 Council Conclusions encouraged making **institutional change a key element of their national policy framework on gender equality in R&I** (14846/15). A 2018 survey among MS and AC (ERAC 1213/18) identified significant differences between strong and moderate innovators, with strong innovators having more actions and measures to promote gender equality in place. The institutional change approach was reported as adopted at that time in: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Slovenia, and Spain among MS and Israel and Switzerland among AC.

Furthermore, the CC also invited the MS to **provide incentives to encourage RPOs to revise or develop their gender equality plans and gender mainstreaming strategies**. The survey identified that incentives had been introduced in: Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal among MC and Iceland, Israel, Switzerland, Turkey among AC.

The ERA Roadmap and ERA National Actions Plans and Strategies have played a clear catalytic role in a large number of EU MS but progress toward achieving gender equality in the ERA remains insufficient and highly uneven across different European countries (e.g. WK 8491/2020 INIT, ERAC 1213/18, Wroblewski 2019).

The Communication on the new ERA [A new ERA for Research and Innovation](#) (COM/2020/628 final) entails **a new concept for the ERA** that consists of deepening existing priorities and initiatives, where possible through new and stronger approaches. As regards gender equality, the Commission proposes, as of 2021, in line with the Horizon Europe programme objectives, the development of inclusive gender equality plans with MS and stakeholders in order to promote gender equality in European R&I. Furthermore, the Council Conclusions on the New European Research Area of 1 December 2020 (13567/20), in article 27.ii, call 'on the Commission and Member States for a renewed focus on gender equality and mainstreaming, including through the instrument of gender equality plans and the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content. [and] INVITES Member States and research funding organisations to advance measures to ensure that allocation of research funding is not affected by gender bias.'

In view of the reaffirmed policy focus on gender equality by the Commission and the Council and the new Horizon Europe requirement for applicants to have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in place as a sine qua non eligibility criterion, this is a highly opportune time to launch a strategic policy dialogue to take Gender Equality Plans to the next stage.

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN: DEFINITIONS

In Horizon Europe, the General Annexes stipulate the following minimum process-related requirements that a Gender Equality Plan² must meet:

- publication: a formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management;
- dedicated resources: commitment of resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan;
- data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) and annual reporting based on indicators;
- training: awareness-raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.

In terms of the content of a Gender Equality Plan, the General Annexes list the following areas for which concrete measures and targets must be defined:

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

Furthermore, the Communication from the Commission 'A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth' (COM(2012) 392 final) contains the following definition 'Implement institutional change relating to HR management, funding, decision-making and research programmes through Gender Equality Plans which aim to:

- Conduct impact assessment / audits of procedures and practices to identify gender bias
- Implement innovative strategies to correct any bias
- Set targets and monitor progress via indicators'.

The EIGE GEAR Tool, set up by the EC³ to provide support to Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) that are developing a GEP defines the following four steps of GEP design, implementation and evaluation:

² Note that a strategic plan or an inclusion strategy that would fulfil all mandatory requirements of a GEP will be considered as equivalent.

³ The step-by-step GEAR tool developed by EIGE is available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

State-of-play - The first analysis consists of a state-of-play at the RPO:

- 'reviewing relevant legislation and policies in your country'
- 'analysing sex-disaggregated data about staff and students'
- 'identifying the existing measures promoting gender equality'

Drafting - 'When developing the Gender Equality Plan, keep in mind that it needs to be **holistic and integrated**. This means that the identified areas of intervention are interdependent. The Plan will address a variety of issues relevant to the whole community and organisational system. There are a few basic elements to be considered when setting up the Gender Equality Plan:

- Objectives
- Measures
- Indicators
- Targets
- Timeline
- Division of responsibilities'

Implementing - Implementing a GEP can involve different aspects such as:

- organising regular meetings with relevant staff to 'create ownership [...], motivating the staff involved, strengthening the potential of the Plan, maximising the impact of the Plan's actions'
- training the relevant staff
- giving visibility to the GEP by developing 'key messages tailored to different target groups, advertise activities [...], instigate the whole community to take action by suggesting how others can contribute, promote external events [...], report about the progress towards gender equality in the institution on a regular basis'.

Monitoring and evaluating - 'monitoring and evaluation instruments are firstly to be seen as tools supporting effective actions and creating accountability. Secondly, by providing indicators against which actions can be assessed and resources allocated, they also enhance the knowledge about on-going changes'. Monitoring and evaluation can take different forms as long as they investigate both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

It is important to highlight that GEPs are today the dominant policy instrument to achieve long-term, sustainable advancement toward gender equality. Implementing GEPs must be seen as part of an **institutional change process** where certain key factors such as leadership commitment, allocated resources and a supporting body should be in place to ensure that the identified gender equality actions in a GEP are resilient and have the intended impact. ⁴

⁴ See EIGE. 2016. *Roadmap to Gender Equality Plans in research and Higher Education Institutions. Success factors and common obstacles*. Available online at https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/gear_roadmap_02_successfactors_obstacles.pdf, and KIF

DATA AND METHODS: THE 2021 SWG GRI SURVEY ON GEPS

In response to these policy developments, the SWG GRI launched a task force to examine the state of play on the implementation of GEPS at the MS and the AC level and to map the needs of MS, AC and other stakeholders as regards this requirement.

The SWG GRI task force on Gender Equality Plans was launched at the 7th meeting of the SWG GRI, consisting of representatives from AT, CZ, ES, FI, IE, IL, NO, SK, and TR. The task force developed a survey, which was launched online on 4 December 2020, with a deadline for completion by 15 January 2021, extended until 31 January 2021.

This survey aimed to map the (non)existence of a Gender Equality Plan requirement at the national level in the Member States and Associated Countries. SWG GRI members were asked to provide the bases (or absence of bases) for the GEP requirement at the national level for different types of institutions, to provide an overview of the implementation of GEPS in their country, and to explain the obstacles and needs for the GEPS implementation.

Twenty-nine countries⁵ provided a GEPS mapping overview, including 23 MS and 6 AC.

Table 1: Overview of survey responses

Member States	Associated Countries
Austria (AT), Belgium (BE-FWB + BE-Flanders + BE-Brussels Capital Region + BE-Federal level), Cyprus (CY), the Czech Republic (CZ), Germany (DE), Denmark (DK), Estonia (EE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), Finland (FI), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Lithuania (LT), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Sweden (SE), Slovenia (SI), and Slovakia (SK).	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA), Switzerland (CH), Israel (IL), Iceland (IS), Norway (NO) and Turkey (TR).

Committee's recommendations for gender balance, available online at <https://kifinfo.no/en/kif-committees-recommendations-gender-balance>.

⁵ The following two SWG GRI Member States did not respond to the survey: Bulgaria (BG) and Luxembourg (LU).

Limitations of the survey and notes on methodology

The survey among SWG GRI members was intended as a first mapping of the approaches that the MS and AC take to promote sustainable institutional changes through the instrument of GEPs. The objective was to **map the proportion of countries that are currently aligned with the Horizon Europe GEP requirement at the national level**, and the approaches which the MS and AC take to institutionalise GEPs, to assess the proportions of Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) with a GEP and to identify the needs of the MS and AC with respect to GEP implementation.

The survey, therefore, did not seek to map the experience at the institutional level with the implementation of GEPs. Furthermore, SWG GRI notes that large **gaps may exist between GEP requirements as defined by law or policy document and the actual implementation of such a GEP at the institutional level.** This is, however, outside the scope of the SWG GRI's remit and the scope of this analysis.

Furthermore, the institutionalisation of GEPs as a policy instrument is a reflection of at least two features of a country's national policy and research systems. Firstly, European countries take different approaches to designing policy solutions, including policies for gender equality. Some countries tend to rely more on legislative solutions, with a top-down focus, whereas others may employ more bottom-up approaches.

Thus, countries listed as having a GEP requirement at the national level are the ones in which an actual requirement exists and has been established through law and a national level policy or strategy; then, there are countries (BE, DE) where the requirement is established at the regional level. Lastly, countries listed as having no GEP requirement may, in fact, have incentives in place (including funding) for the implementation of GEPs but not a requirement. In still other countries, there are other support mechanisms (such as support centres, gender equality research centres and others) that contribute to promoting sustainable institutional changes but without the explicit use of the GEP as an instrument (e.g. CZ, PT, TR).

Additional sources of information

Supplementary information regarding the role of SWG GRI members in developing GEPs as well as the main pressing issues and needs for support was obtained through a discussion⁶ prepared for the ERAC workshop 'Gender Equality Plans as a Catalyst for Change' co-organised with the Council of Europe Trio-Presidency (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia) on 15 March 2021. Thirteen MS and AC answered the questions: AT, BE (BE-Brussels-Capital Region, BE-Flanders, BE-FWB), DE, EE, FI, FR, HR, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT and SE.

⁶ See the three questions in Annex 2.

Additional recommendations were identified through an online campaign *#SpeedUpChange* co-organised by the Horizon 2020 projects Gearing-Roles⁷ and GENDERACTION⁸ on the occasion of the 2021 International Day of Women and Girls in Science.⁹ The campaign attracted 877 posts on Twitter from 323 users representing Higher Education and Research Institutions, gender equality researchers, H2020 projects focusing on gender equality (the 'sister projects') as well as other projects from other Work programmes and actors. The campaign participants were invited to express their insights and needs with respect to what national public authorities should do to support gender equality in R&I. Of the 877 posts received, 114 tweets contained recommendations for various areas of action, which were analysed in these categories: gender approach to knowledge generation, financial support, biases and stereotypes, equal and inclusive leadership, capacity building and mutual learning, institutional recognition and visibility of GE initiatives, and evaluation of actions and institutional accountability. Some of these contained specific recommendations related to the implementation of GEPs.

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN REQUIREMENTS: STATE OF PLAY IN 2021

The SWG GRI survey mapped the existence (or absence) of a GEP requirement instituted by national law or policy/strategy for the following institutions:

- public and private higher education institutions (HEIs),
- public and private research performing and research funding organisations (RPOs and RFOs)
- public national authorities
- public services
- private sector companies with a certain number of employees.

This section reports the results in two sub-sections: one presents the countries in which a GEP requirement is in place at the national level and the second presents the ones in which a GEP requirement at the national level has not yet been instituted. For this latter group, examples of recent developments are provided that in some instances (such as NL) provide a basis for future implementation of GEPs at RPOs. Others take a different form of GEP requirement (including various sorts of incentives for gender equality actions as in the case of BE) and still others provide information on other developments that may contribute to the overall uptake of GEPs by RPOs and their capacity building.

⁷ <https://gearingroles.eu/>

⁸ <https://genderaction.eu/>

⁹ For further details, see Campanini Vilhena et al. 2021. *Report on the Analysis of the Twitter #SpeedUpChange Campaign Celebrating 11th of February 2021.*

Countries with a GEP requirement at the national level

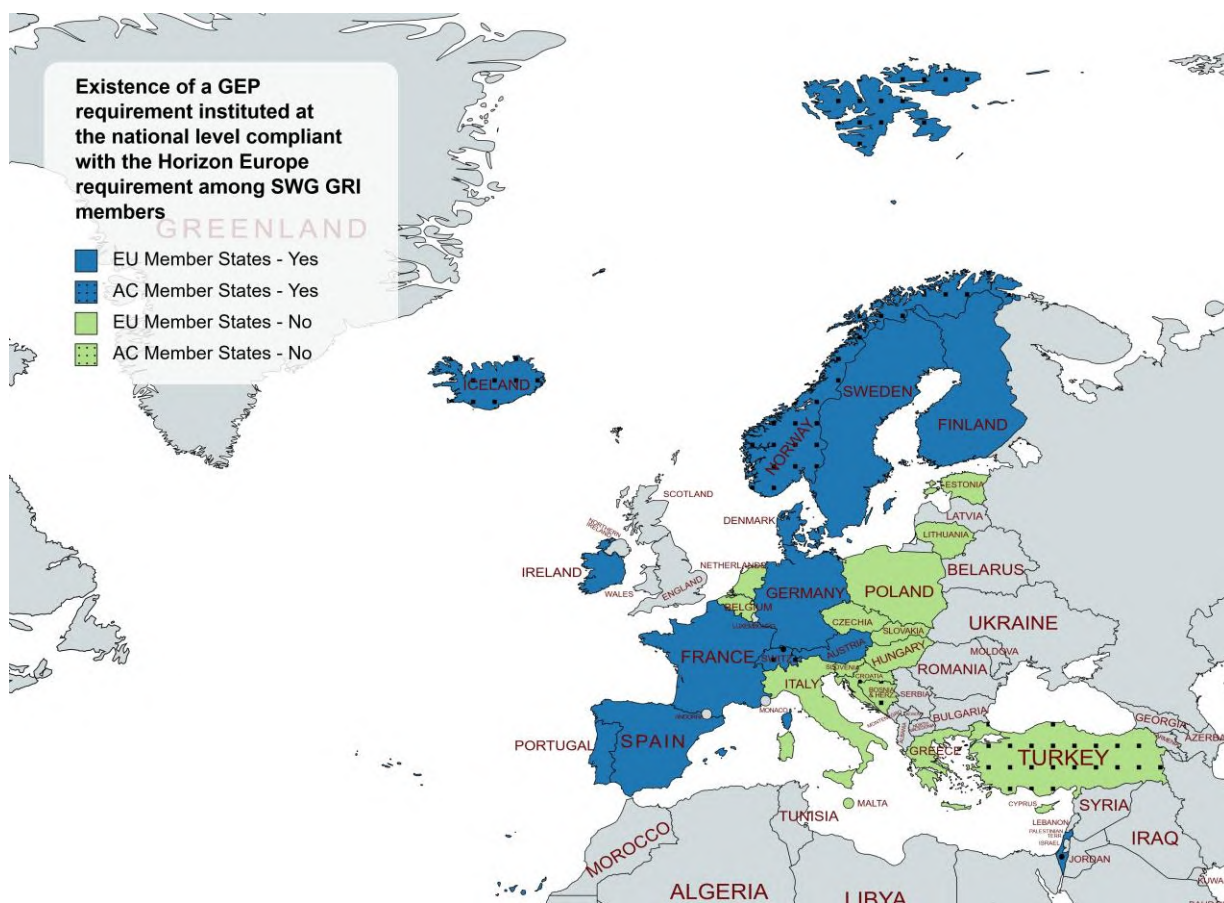


Figure 1: The existence of a GEP requirement instituted at the national level through law, policy or strategy that is compliant with the Horizon Europe requirement

According to the survey, there are 6 countries that require the adoption of GEPs in all the sectors considered in the survey, i.e. public and private HEIs, RFOs, the public sector and private companies (DE, DK, FI, and SE among MS and IS, NO among AC) while 13 countries have a GEP requirement specifically for higher education institutions at the national or regional level (among the MS these countries are AT, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, PT, SE, and among the AC they are IL, IS, NO, CH).

When countries adopt requirements for GEPs in public HEIs, they also tend to require GEPs in public RPOs (85%), national public authorities (85%), public RFOs (77%) and private sector companies (69%). The majority of this group of countries (61%) also considers the adoption of GEPs in public services. Although the countries that require GEPs in private HEIs represent 54% of the sample, this is the sector with the lowest numbers in the sample (7 of the 13 countries considered). Thus, the first conclusion of this preliminary analysis is that there is room for improvement in private HEIs regarding GEP implementation even in those countries with GEP requirements in diverse public and private institutions. For instance, France, Germany and Portugal require GEPs for private companies but not for private HEIs. Particularly noteworthy is the case of **Ireland** which could be considered a role model regarding GEPs in the R&I field but does not require GEPs in any of the other sectors considered. Thus, the R&I institutions could become role models for implementing a GEP requirement in other institutions and sectors.

Table 2 below shows that the most common types of requirements among the 13 MS and AC are established by law (77%) and/or national public policies (69%). It also provides insights on the features of these requirements, and on the existence of building blocks, support structures, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, sanctions and funding for the development of GEPs in HEIs and/or RPOs. The two least commonly used features are sanctions and the provision of funding. In 54% of the 13 countries, there are sanctions for non-compliance (ES, FI, FR, IE, IL, IS, SE) and only CH, IE, and IL provide funding for the development of GEPs. Only Ireland has all the features and can be considered to have the most comprehensive policy.

Table 2. Requirements for GEPs in public HEIs and/or RPOs and their features

Country	Law	Public policy	Building blocks	Support Structures	Monitoring	Sanctions	Funding for GEP development
Austria	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Germany	Yes*	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Denmark	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
France	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Iceland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ireland	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Israel	No***	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Portugal	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Sweden	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Switzerland	Yes**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

*Germany has a legal GEP requirement for RPOs on the federal level. For HEIs the requirement is in place at the regional level (Länder), and Länders are responsible for GEP implementation.

**Switzerland has gender equality as a legal requirement for institutional accreditation of HEIs. GEPs are compulsory in order to apply for funds at the national level for cooperative projects.

***Israel does not have a legal GEP requirement for HEIs and RPOs in academia but it is in place for some of the national RPOs.

Good practices

This section presents examples of the types of GEP requirement for each of the 12 MS and AC that have requirements for GEPs at the national level for at least one type of institution.

Austria

Public and private HEIs have a similar legal base: In their statutes, public universities have to enact and implement an equal opportunity plan in addition to a women's promotion plan (BGBl. I No. 21/2015). Both plans are linked to the Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GlBG), which applies to public universities and includes both an obligation to promote women and the prohibition of discrimination against gender, ethnic origin, religion or ideology, age, sexual orientation and the prohibition of gender-related harassment. The obligations to adopt equality plans and women's promotion plans are anchored in the University Act (UG 2002), which applies to public universities in Austria. University colleges that provide teacher education are subject to the Higher Education Act (HG), which also contains regulations for the adoption and implementation of plans for the promotion of women and equality plans. These are anchored in the statutes as well. The equality plans of university colleges devoted to teacher education are linked to the Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GlBG). For universities of applied sciences and private universities, a provision for the development and adoption of equality plans was introduced for the first time at the beginning of 2021 - through the University of Applied Sciences Act (FHG) and the Private University Act (PrivHG), respectively. Two public research institutions have anchored specifications for the development and implementation of equality plans in a performance agreement with the Federal Ministry. For the non-university research area and for research funding institutions, there are currently no requirements for GEPs in place.

Germany

The GEPs requirement for public research organisations is established at the federal level, by the Federal Gender Equality Law (Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz, §11). Additionally, RPOs and RFOs are bound by the Joint Science Conference Implementation Agreement on equal opportunities which sets the requirement to report on gender equality measures and to appoint equal opportunities officers. However, the requirement for GEPs for HEIs is established on the regional level by the Higher Education Acts of all Länder which oblige universities to issue gender equality plans. The denominations of these plans and their characteristics differ across Länder.

Denmark

In line with the Danish Act on Equality between Women and Men, every three years or anytime on request from the Ministry of Equality, public authorities, state institutions, and state-owned companies with over 50 employees (including universities and RPOs) have the obligation to report to the Ministry of Equality on their gender equality objectives, on actions taken and future actions for equality (such as guiding targets or other gender equality initiatives), and on their gender distribution in management and in their staff in general.

Finland

According to the Act on Equality between Women and Men, education providers are responsible for ensuring that each educational institution prepares a gender equality plan annually in cooperation with staff and pupils or students. The gender equality plan may be incorporated into the curriculum or some other plan drawn up by the educational institution. The gender equality plan must include: 1) an assessment of the gender equality situation within the institution; 2) the necessary measures to promote gender equality; 3) a review of the extent to which measures previously included in it have been implemented and of the results achieved. Special attention must be given to pupil or student selections, the organisation of teaching, learning differences, and the evaluation of study performance, and to the measures used to ensure the prevention and elimination of sexual harassment and gender-based harassment. Instead of an annual review, the plan may be prepared no less than once every three years¹⁰. Not only as education providers but also as employers, similar gender equality duties apply to HEIs, RPOs and RFOs with 30 or more employees. Furthermore, the Government's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023 brings together the goals and measures of the Government of Prime Minister Sanna Marin for promoting gender equality. As a part of this programme, the Ministry of Education and Culture studied the GEP situation in HEIs and RPOs.

France

France has two laws¹¹ that set the requirement for GEPs and appoint a gender referent at each HEI, RPO and RFO. The GEP needs to report on different aspects such as salary gaps, professional gender diversity and equal access to responsibilities, the balance between private and professional life, and the fight against gender-based violence and harassment at the workplace. The Ministry of Higher Education and Research provided specific guidelines and appointed three full-time employees to support public establishments about gender equality. If the institutions do not comply, a sanction in the form of a fine of 1% of the total of the salaries paid over a year will follow.

¹⁰ Act on Equality between Women and Men: Section 5a (1329/2014) 'Measures to promote gender equality in educational institutions' for HEIs and RPOs, Section 4 for RFOs.

¹¹ Law on the transformation of Public Services, 2019 and Law about higher education & research, 2013.

Iceland

According to the Act on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 10/2008, all companies and institutions that have 25 or more employees are required to establish a GEP or to integrate gender equality perspectives in their employee policy. The building blocks focus on wage equality, job vacancies, vocational training, continuing education and lifelong learning, the coordination of family and work life, and how employers and managers should prevent gender-based violence in the workplace. The Directorate of Equality provides guidelines and support institutions. There are sanctions for non-compliance.

Ireland

There is a complex gender equality framework in place in Irish Higher Education supported centrally by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and framed by two national policies.¹² It applies only to public HEIs, although some private HEIs have developed GEPs in the absence of a requirement. The HEA funds the Athena SWAN charter in Ireland and this funding includes dedicated resources and training to support HEIs to develop GEPs¹³. Data on staff by gender is collected and published annually by the HEA. Funding is available for capacity building.¹⁴ There are specific areas of action identified in national policy documents including but not limited to: leadership, funding, recruitment and promotion procedures, governance and management. Also, national policy is now focusing on other areas, specifically gender-based violence and sexual harassment, and race/ethnicity equality. The target audiences are all HEI staff (academic and professional/support staff) but there are initiatives that focus on specific cohorts. If HEIs do not comply with the requirement, they are ineligible for public research funding (by virtue of not holding an Athena SWAN award which necessitates a GEP) and are at risk of losing up to 10% of their core funding for failing to progress gender equality including having a GEP in place.

¹² <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/HEA-National-Review-of-Gender-Equality-in-Irish-Higher-Education-Institutions.pdf>; <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2018/11/Gender-Equality-Taskforce-Action-Plan-2018-2020.pdf>

¹³ <https://hea.ie/policy/gender/statistics/>

¹⁴ <https://hea.ie/funding-calls/gender-equality-enhancement-fund/>

Israel

Israel adopted a government resolution (No. 2331) in 2014 on the promotion of gender equality and the assimilation of gender thinking. It requires the 'Civil Service Commissioner' to change the status and structure of the Authority for the Advancement of Women, requires the directors of government ministries to take action to assimilate gender thinking in the manner specified, and introduce reporting obligations on the subject, and requires the authorities to have a comprehensive action plan to promote gender equality. Furthermore, there is a national strategy that encourages HEIs and RPOs to submit GEPs or other programmes aimed at promoting gender equality such as a strategic institutional long-term plan that has building blocks, quantitative and qualitative measures, target audiences such as increasing the proportions of women among senior academic staff, top management, etc. A Steering Committee has been set up to approve and monitor GEPs. Israel presents several strong incentives to adopt and implement GEPs such as the PBC (planning & budgeting committee) which provides funds to institutions to build GEPs; the institutions that present the highest improvements each year receive additional budgets, this programme is called the GE "Equator measure" program and provides funds to institutions based on the GEP implementation. If the GEP is not implemented, the budget is not given.

Norway

Norway has the Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Act which include a requirement to have a GEP and report on it annually. In January 2020 this Act expanded the duty of employers (all public undertakings and private undertakings with more than 50 employees which include all HEIs) to promote equality by making these undertakings do a risk analysis of discrimination or other barriers to equality as a basis for identifying active, targeted and systematic measures for equality and anti-discrimination. In the Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Act, there is also a requirement to report annually on the GEP. All required employers have to issue a statement on the actual status of gender equality at the institution, the work they have done meeting the requirements of the activity duty and every other year the institutions are required to issue a statement on the gender pay gap, involuntary part-time and gender distribution at different position levels. The statement on equality and anti-discrimination is to be published in the institution's annual report or another public document. The Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Act and its expansion from January 2020 is referred to in the University and University College Act for all HEIs and in the Ministry of Education and Research's annual Letter of Allocation that goes to all HEIs with public funding.

Portugal

Portugal has a very well-developed legal requirement for a plan for equality between women and men (PAIMH) with additional provisions on higher education institutions that relate to the inclusion of gender issues in research and teaching contents. GEPs are promoted according to the national legal framework (ENIND), and they are seen as an important tool to foster institutional change, but they are not mandatory as such by law. Laws address partial features of a GEP and are binding for listed companies which must annually submit their plans regarding the representation of women on boards of directors (up to 30% of the under-represented group); in public administration (the minimum threshold for the representation of men and women is 40%). From the institutional point of view, there are two main coordinating bodies (CIG and CITE), and also the implementation structure of ENIND itself. ENIND consists of a strategic document, to be developed over the long term (2018-2030), and a broad legal/institutional framework which sets out in detail the short-term goals and targets defined at the level of National Action Plans. GEPs are a very important concern, that is reflected in many objectives, including support for the creation and implementation of plans for gender balance (GEPs) and advanced training on discrimination matters, mainly intersectional, in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (followed by CIG); gender equality plans that integrate violence against women and domestic violence as a theme in HEIs (also followed by CIG); gender equality plans that integrate the theme of sexual orientation, identity and the expression of gender and sexual characteristics (also followed by CIG).

Spain

Spain is an atypical case given that 96% of public universities have a GEP in place (according to data from the last report *Científicas en Cifras 2017*) although the origin was not a specific legal requirement for universities. The Organic Law on Effective Equality between Women and Men (3/2007) provided a strong impetus for the development of GEPs at Spanish universities. This law together with the provisions included in 2007 in the Organic Law on Universities (4/2007) regulate the establishment of gender equality structures and policies at universities in Spain.

Sweden

The two legal requirements for HEIs, RPOs, and RFOs are the Discrimination Act (2008:567) and the Higher Education Law (1992:1434). The requirements are similar to that of IS or FI in terms of building blocks. In addition, Sweden has set up a support structure, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency, which provides guidelines and support. The Discrimination Ombudsman has the responsibility of overseeing compliance with the Discrimination Act. Sanctions for non-compliance include financial penalties and orders to comply. Monitoring is carried out by the National Agency for Higher Education and by Statistics Sweden. Additionally, there was a gender equality mainstreaming programme for all universities and university colleges for the period 2016-2019 which now is a permanent instruction for HEIs. Similarly, there was a 2014-2018 gender equality mainstreaming programme and it is now a gender mainstreaming instruction for state research funders.

Switzerland

The Federal Act on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector sets the criteria for the accreditation of HEIs. Equal opportunities and gender equality is one of them. In addition, the Confederation set up the Federal P-7 Programme of Equal Opportunities and University Development which funds HEIs and RPOs to develop and implement GEPs and cooperative projects. These funds function as an incentive for universities to implement GEPs. Conversely, however, no explicit sanctions are foreseen if an HEI foregoes a GEP (and the additional programme funds). To date, 25 HEIs out of 34 have benefited from the programme¹⁵. As of 2024, HEIs have the financial responsibility to carry on and develop GEPs following the bottom-up approach. The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) supervises and controls the results of the yearly reporting and publishes a controlling report for the attention of the Swiss Higher Education Council. In the case of non-compliance, a reduction of funding may be decided by the steering committee of the P-7.

Countries where a GEP requirement has not yet been instituted at the national level

The countries that have not yet instituted a GEP requirement at the national level are the following: CY, CZ, EE, EL, HR, HU, IT, LT, MT, ML, PL, SI, SK among MS and BA, and TR among AC. However, in some countries, RPOs have a GEP either as a result of their participation in Horizon 2020 Swafs calls (e.g. CZ, EE, IT, HR, TR), at their own initiative or as a result of the support provided by their national authorities (e.g. MT, PL, SK). Countries that have almost no GEPs in HEIs show an interest in GEP requirements because of the GEP eligibility requirement to apply for funding to Horizon Europe (e.g. BA, CY, EL, HU, IT).

Important developments at the national level

As already stated, the non-existence of a GEP requirement is not indicative of overall developments in gender equality in higher education and research at the national level. This section presents the developments that have been made, some of which indicate a very high degree of ambition for the upcoming period.

¹⁵ <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/topics/equal-opportunities/p-7-equal-opportunity-and-university-development>

Belgium

Belgium has GEP-related provisions and mechanisms at regional and community levels. Generic gender equality and equal opportunities regulations for the entire nation exist at the federal level (equivalent to national level) but GEP-related provisions fall on regions and communities through subnational legal requirements.

Wallonia-Brussels Federation

As such, there is no requirement for HEIs, RPOs, or RFOs to have a GEP but there exist other mechanisms that are grounded in legislation.

- The 6 universities and the RFO (F.R.S.-FNRS) need to appoint gender-contact persons¹⁶ who are allocated a specific budget to ensure the implementation of their missions (information, awareness-raising, networking and contributing to setting up gender equality policies). These missions do not explicitly include a GEP but this mechanism and its funding help institutions in adopting a GEP.
- The 'Plan Droit des femmes' has a legal basis¹⁷ and covers many fields of the Ministry. It has a provision in the 3rd axis 'Ensure a better representation of women in all professional sectors and at all levels and in decision-making bodies' specifically on gender balance in higher education and research where it is stated that the responsible ministry will adopt an action plan for equality between women and men in HE and research¹⁸.
- The intra-francophone plan to combat gender-based violence has one recommendation relating to supporting HEIs and RPOs in setting up tools and support systems for gender-based violence survivors.

¹⁶ https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/42601_001.pdf

¹⁷ https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/48073_000.pdf

¹⁸

http://www.egalite.cfwb.be/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecuredl&u=0&g=0&hash=fba5f84be288ad0d20ffc7c6da00b8b6df5d46fa&file=fileadmin/sites/sdec_III/upload/sdec_III_super_editor/sdec_III_editor/documents/Droits_des_Femmes/Plan_Droits_des_Femmes_2020-2024_FWB.pdf, Point 3.7, p. 25.

Belgium – Community of Flanders

In Flanders, like in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, there is no formal GEP requirement but via intensive consultations between RFOs and HEIs and RPOs, there are equivalent constructive initiatives and engagements:

- HEIs, RPOs, and RFOs address the themes of equality, equal opportunity, diversity, non-discrimination in their strategic plans. For example, in June 2019, the rectors of the Flemish universities signed a new Gender Charter to accelerate the effort started in 2013 to achieve the goal of gender equality. By law, boards of management have a quota of between one third and two thirds of one gender; data collection and the monitoring of gender data, measures and actions for equal opportunities are also required in formal periodic reports. The strategic plans on research are evaluated on a yearly basis.
- The Horizontal Integration and Equal Opportunities Policy Plan 2020-2024 applies to all Flanders administration bodies. The plan employs an intersectional perspective and presents different building blocks such as actions, research, data collection and monitoring. A yearly report is submitted to the Flanders Parliament.

Belgium – Brussels Region

In the Brussels Region, there is no GEP requirement but there are equivalent requirements:

- When it comes to gender inclusion in innovation policy, a number of measures and actions are already in place, notably in the framework of the regional gender mainstreaming action plan. This plan was established in 2017 through an in-depth analysis of data and literature with the assistance of gender experts, and its focus is on internal and external scientific awareness-raising actions with a gender dimension. Many of these actions have been carried out to date, and they include mandatory training on gender biases for people leading jury selection for R&D project proposals.
- Gender is also given special attention in the specific strategic plan for science awareness-raising.
- In addition, the Brussels region also provides for the mandatory equal opportunities test per grant application, in which gender is widely addressed, and the regional innovation funding agency responds to the gender budgeting policy with a gender-based budget allocation.

The Czech Republic

The Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has provided funding for the Centre for Gender and Science since 2001. The Centre acts as the national contact point for gender equality in research and innovation. The current support approved by the government covers the period of 2021-2027. In line with its objectives, the Centre provides support to Czech RPOs and RFOs to implement gender equality measures including gender equality plans (training, workshops, and consultations) and runs a national Community of Practice with over 350 members. In addition, the Centre provides strategic policy advice to the relevant ministries and bodies of state administration as well as RFOs. In 2020, the Centre prepared a methodology to implement gender equality by RFOs for the Governmental Research, Development and Innovation Council approved by the Council in October 2020. In 2021, the Centre launched a dedicated website called One Size Doesn't Fit All to raise awareness about the gender dimension in research among the research community and the wider public, to support the Horizon Europe default requirement. Also, on 8 March 2021 the government adopted the Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030 which contains Section 8 with two relevant Strategic Objectives: SO2 Extending the content of education, science and research to include a gender perspective and SO3 Applying a gender perspective in the operation and management of educational and research institutions

Italy

Italy has a legal requirement for national, regional, and local public authorities and non-profit institutions (that includes RPOs) to adopt a triennial Positive Action Plan aimed at removing the obstacles that hamper the full realisation of equal opportunities at work. However, this requirement does not provide any guidelines, budget, building blocks, or sanctions. In addition, there are no specific provisions for R&I organisations.

Lithuania

Apart from equal opportunities legislation, Lithuania has set up the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson which provides well-made practical tools for the implementation of GEPs.¹⁹

¹⁹ <https://www.lygybesplanai.lt/>

Malta

The Parliament is currently debating the Equality Bill (Bill 96). This legislation consolidates and strengthens the current equality law in Malta, by ensuring an equal level of protection against discrimination for all protected characteristics in all spheres of life. It also imposes considerable obligations on the Government, including, *inter alia* ensuring equality mainstreaming when formulating and implementing laws, regulations, administrative provisions, policies, and activities, and creating and adopting an Equality Action Plan. The Action Plan should not be limited solely to gender but should consider all characteristics protected by the proposed bill (e.g. disability, race, sexual orientation, age, etc.). The bill is currently at the Committee Stage and is expected to be approved by the Parliament in the second half of 2021. These developments consolidate the Government policy as per the circular titled '*Gender Mainstreaming in Practice*' issued in 2012 by the Office of the Prime Minister. This circular stipulates that '*each department/entity is required to prepare a brief report on the measures taken and the progress achieved in the sphere of gender equality and gender mainstreaming*'.

The Netherlands

The National Action Plan for greater diversity and inclusion in Higher Education and Research lists five goals for the period of 2020-2025,²⁰ including goal n°4, which is to 'bring together and support institutional diversity plans'. An Advisory Committee and a Centre of Excellence will be set up to advise the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on these goals with adequate expertise and administrative resources. The Advisory Committee will also provide guidelines and assistance on the design and implementation of GEPs to HEIs. The basic building blocks will be in line with the ones proposed by the European Commission and will be expanded to other forms of diversity, such as ethnic diversity, LGBT+, and disability.

Slovenia

Slovenia is in the process of adopting new legislation in the field of science and research, where special emphasis on gender equality will be introduced. Public research organisations will be obliged to adopt and implement measures in the area of gender equality, address their effects at least once a year, and report them in the framework of regular annual reports.

²⁰ <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2020/09/01/national-action-plan-for-greater-diversity-and-inclusion-in-higher-education-and-research>

Turkey

Out of 207 universities in Turkey, 107 have Gender Equality Research Centres established by the encouragement of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in the last 15 years. The Directors of these centres are members of their university senates. These centres are expected to keep records on the indicators related to gender equality and make them visible, carry out research projects on the subject area, and create awareness on the issue across the university. The CoHE has also taken action to increase the proportion of women deans at universities by asking the universities to propose at least one female candidate among the three candidates for any deanship. Moreover, several universities have participated in the European Framework Programme's SwafS projects and have established their own GEPs. These GEPs may not exactly follow the requirements introduced for Horizon Europe but they created a culture across these universities to design and implement GEPs in a certain format. As the most important RFO of Turkey, TUBITAK (the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) established its Gender Equality Advisory Group in 2019, prepared the first Policy Paper for achieving gender equality in all its actions and has taken significant steps in the evaluation process of 'TUBITAK Awards' since the year 2019.

MAIN CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Building political consensus to achieve substantive change through GEPs

In the SWG GRI survey, **cultural barriers and resistance** to gender equality issues both among R&I stakeholders and in the societies at large were recognised as one of the main obstacles to advancing gender equality in Europe. Therefore, promoting a common framework for GEPs is not just a technical endeavour of developing a steering instrument but must also be seen in the wider context of **building a common framework for European values and a common understanding of gender equality in R&I.**

Because cultural barriers vary among European countries, this area might represent the biggest challenge to building a common framework. In some countries, the main issue lies in the perceptions related to gender roles, while in others there is the illusion that gender equality has already been achieved or that it is a private issue. Hence, the overall situation of gender equality in each country must be taken into account when developing a common framework for GEPs. The introduction of participatory techniques in the design, implementation and monitoring of GEPs should be considered so that the research community, institutions' employees and students, and citizens have the opportunity to be involved in these policies and make them more meaningful. In line with the ERAC Opinion on the new ERA (ERAC 1201/20), there is, therefore, a vital need to 'understand, respect and tap into the diversity of the national, including regional and local, research and innovation systems, to achieve a more synchronised co-evolution of R&I systems, strengthen their quality and excellence, reduce the existing inequalities and fragmentation, and foster connectivity, collaboration and complementarities, thus maximising the effectiveness of the ERA at all levels', including the adoption and implementation of GEPs.

Recommendation 1:

The SWG GRI calls on the Commission and Member States to demonstrate a shared political will to develop a common understanding of gender equality in R&I and GEPs as a means to achieve this. A common understanding of gender equality in RPOs and RFOs would be a strong contribution to building the new European Research Area, and should be enshrined in the currently developed Pact for EU Research and Innovation.

2. Policy coordination to build a common definition of a GEP requirement

One of the main challenges identified by the SWG GRI is the **lack of a unified definition of a gender equality plan** across Europe. While some of the countries with a GEP requirement at the national level define the building blocks (AT, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, IE, NO, PT) and some have monitoring of GEP implementation in place (CH, DE, DK, FR, IS, IE, NO, PT, SE), overall, there is a need for EU countries to **develop a common understanding of GEPs and their minimum criteria as a policy instrument while acknowledging variability in the approaches adopted**. SWG GRI members underscore that GEPs are an instrument to achieve sustainable institutional changes, and hence the common definition should derive from this objective. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that process-related requirements with robust monitoring and evaluation significantly contribute to the quality assurance in the implementation of GEPs or similar equivalent instruments.

The development of a common understanding would not only help in achieving policy coordination but would also clarify the requirements for RPOs and facilitate monitoring at both the EU and the national level. This is all the more vital given the new Horizon Europe requirement that will be in force as of 2022. European RPOs would benefit greatly from a clarification of the GEP definition and the mandatory process-related building blocks and potential alignment between EU and national definitions of GEPs. To the extent feasible, the common definition of a GEP should be reflected in national legal or policy requirements.

In this respect, the SWG GRI underscores the different needs at the national level related to the varying levels of uptake. The needs may differ in countries that have GEP requirements and in those that do not. In these countries, the national authorities should launch gender equality dialogues in parallel to the development of the GEP to maximise institutional change.

The SWG GRI wishes to underscore the benefits of having a governance structure in place to facilitate policy exchange, policy coordination, mutual learning and capacity building for advancing gender equality in R&I at the policy level in the EU.

Recommendation 2:

The SWG GRI calls on the Commission and the Member States, together with the Associated Countries and ERA Stakeholders, to continue the policy dialogue to develop a common, flexible framework to implement sustainable institutional changes and ensure a cultural shift in R&I with the use of instruments such as a GEP or its equivalents.

3. Monitoring and evaluation of GEP implementation

The SWG GRI survey also highlights the issue of the **quality assurance of GEP implementation, monitoring and evaluation**. The survey reveals that the formal adoption of GEPs is only the first step, and there is rarely any reliable evaluation of GEP implementation (see also item 4 below). The survey has also identified another challenge, which is that persistent gaps exist between formal equality and substantive work on gender equality. There is therefore a vital need for **European countries, together with the Commission, to devise a GEP monitoring and evaluation methodology** that would ensure the avoidance of box-ticking approaches and substantive GEP implementation that builds on a common definition of a GEP (see item 2 above). A **coordination mechanism** should be put in place and **contact persons** should be named in each country to provide a European network on GEP development and monitoring and their effects in R&I. This network should have a strong political and administrative mandate at the national level to put things into action, and its members should be part of an existing national gender equality system or representatives of national authorities responsible of HEIs, RPOs and/or RFOs, and should not operate as consultants. This could be the first step in building a common framework that also recognises the differences between countries. This work could be further supported by putting in place a public database of GEPs instituted by RPOs and RFOs in EU MS and AC. The public availability of GEPs could also contribute to harmonising GEPs across the EU, developing a common European framework for GEPs and ensuring GEP quality assurance. It has also been suggested that different criteria and monitoring should be considered for RPOs and RFOs.

Recommendation 3:

The SWG GRI calls on the Member States to put in place a coordination mechanism with representatives of national authorities to develop, implement and evaluate a GEP monitoring and evaluation methodology, building on existing experience and expertise in the Member States. This coordination mechanism should be part of the policy platform to further policy dialogue.

Recommendation 4:

The SWG GRI calls on the Member States and the Commission to consider building a publicly available database for the publication of GEPs adopted by RPOs and RFOs. This would contribute to mutual learning and to the harmonisation of GEPs in Europe and would facilitate uptake monitoring and quality assurance.

Recommendation 5:

The SWG GRI calls on the Commission to develop and institutionalise a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the GEP eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe to ensure that the new requirement is properly implemented by applicants for Horizon Europe funding.

4. Uptake of GEPs by RPOs at the national level

The SWG GRI survey has also made it clear that the **information regarding GEPs** in public universities and research organisations is **not readily available**, and this applies both to countries with a GEP requirement and to the countries that do not have a GEP requirement (HR, HU, MT, NL, SI, and HR). Only AT, ES, FR, IS, and NO have information on the uptake both by HEIs and by RPOs. In some countries (AT) the information about the number of institutions with an adopted GEP is available but not the content of the GEP; thus, the issue of having common standards for monitoring GEP implementation is crucial (see also item 3 above). Therefore, there is **a need for centralised and updated information on GEP uptake**. European countries could incorporate this in their annual reporting schemes and explore with the Commission **how to ensure reliable and regular data collection on GEP uptake at the RPO and RFO level for *She Figures***. In this respect, it will be interesting to monitor whether the size of the higher education sector, the existence of sanctions for non-compliance and the legislative or policy-based GEP requirement contribute to higher uptake rates.

Recommendation 6:

The SWG GRI calls on the Commission and the Members States to develop a robust reporting mechanism on the uptake of GEPs in the EU Member States and Associated Countries and to publish this information regularly in *She Figures*.

5. Mobilising support and resources to build capacities at the national level

While the EU level has put gender equality and inclusion on the agenda with the strategy 'Union of Equality' and the new Horizon Europe requirement, the SWG GRI considers it important that national authorities provide national support and resources for GEP development and implementation, for example by creating synergies between Horizon Europe and ESF/ERDF. The survey reveals that mobilising national resources is considered of utmost importance. This will be crucial particularly in the countries without a GEP requirement to become ready for the new Horizon Europe requirement. Coordination, information sharing, and advice at the national level are important for meeting the GEP requirement for Horizon Europe and ensuring that the development and implementation of GEPs meets quality standards. SWG GRI members variously suggest that advice, support and guidance to build capacity, training and communication should be developed among relevant national stakeholders, together with the exchange of information and good practice. Furthermore, it has been suggested that national authorities should align and harmonise the GEP requirement with existing national requirements and that stakeholders at the national level should be engaged to develop a common understanding of GEPs and set up coordinated procedures for GEP development and implementation.

Recommendation 7:

The SWG GRI calls on national authorities in MS and AC to ensure that advice provision is coordinated at the national level through the NCPs and that the responsible authorities provide support and resources for, for example, building communities of competence and practice that can provide quality assurance and contextualise GEP development and implementation. This will be important for building national ownership, capacity and accountability. The SWG GRI delegates should be considered as a resource at the national level together with the ERA Forum for Transition and the ERA SWG on Human Resources and Mobility.

6. Involvement of the private sector

There is a **gap between the level of requirements in the public RPOs and private RPOs in different countries** that needs to be addressed, especially in those countries that already require GEPs for private companies. Furthermore, action is needed if the EC is to involve private sector R&I institutions in the new ERA in a systematic manner.

Additionally, the sectorial uptake of GEPs varies in different countries. For instance, in Austria, most universities of applied sciences, private universities and non-university research institutions do not have any GEPs, whereas the public universities have already put women's promotion plans and equality plans into practice. On the opposite side, in Croatia and Poland, private sector companies and universities are more experienced in adopting gender equality measures than the public sector is.

Recommendation 8:

The SWG GRI calls on the Commission to launch awareness raising aimed at private sector companies about the Horizon Europe GEP requirement through information campaigns, webinars, capacity-building programmes, etc. In addition, the private sector should be involved in designing the targeted requirements and consulted on their best practices. Furthermore, if the GEP requirement in Horizon Europe is to be extended to private entities, it is necessary to set a requirement for the size of the company (e.g., 50 or more employees).

Recommendation 9:

The SWG GRI calls on the Member States to consider facilitating links between sectors by creating cross-sectoral platforms of cooperation, mutual learning and exchange. This could also enhance inter-sectorial R&I cooperation which is suboptimal in many countries.

7. Knowledge development, capacity building and mutual learning at the EU level

If basic requirements are a legal or policy-based framework, adequate resources for collecting data, a methodology for the monitoring and evaluation of GEP implementation and capacity building should be the vehicle that transforms words into actions. There is a danger of window dressing and mere lip service being paid to gender equality if there is not enough support for developing capacity and a recognition of the fact that competence and **expertise in developing, implementing, and monitoring GEPs is a field of knowledge.**

Capacity building can include guidance (online and face-to-face), a network of contact persons, and the exchange of good practices, and training programmes for GEP experts, etc. A common capacity-building approach could include European-level training for both civil servants working in the R&I sector and for HEI and RFO leaders and managers. It is important for capacity building to be based on and provided by experts who have both practical experience and theoretical competence in the field of gender mainstreaming and organisational change.

Furthermore, mutual learning activities are needed to address the significant **disparity among countries in terms of the degree of GEP implementation, which ranges from 0% to 100%**. Coordination, information sharing and advice at the European and the national level is important for improving GEP implementation.

In this respect, the SWG GRI welcomes the launch of the Pilot Knowledge and Support Facility on Institutional Change through GEPs and the plan to involve national authorities in the appointment of the contact points; the SWG GRI also welcomes the plan for the EU Gender Equality Competence Facility as well as other actions planned by the Commission to support gender equality and GEP implementation specifically at the policy and institutional levels.

Recommendation 10:

The SWG GRI calls on the Commission and the Member States to reflect the continued need for knowledge development, capacity building and mutual learning at the policy level in the newly developed advisory structure for the new ERA.

8. Inclusiveness with a special focus on intersectionality

In the new ERA, GEPs are conceptualised as inclusive, where inclusivity is addressed along three axes: 1) **intersectional inequalities** and inclusivity in terms of race/ethnicity, age, disability etc.; 2) inclusivity in terms of **geographical balance** and overcoming the Widening divide in the implementation of gender equality actions in R&I; and 3) **inclusivity across sectors** and the involvement of the private sector. Nevertheless, the inputs received indicate that MS and AC present varying levels of understanding and use of this concept. Moreover, inputs from the ERAC workshop suggest that MS and AC do not seem to rank any intersectional aspect as a priority and hence inclusivity itself requires further policy dialogue. Some countries propose using the Structural Funds and Operational Programmes under the Cohesion Policy to promote inclusiveness.

Furthermore, the SWG GRI suggests that a layered approach to including intersectionality in the GEPs could be adopted and priority given to the three intersectional aspects could vary according to the country. For instance, NO suggested that in their country, the first step would be to prioritise gender and ethnicity and gradually add other aspects, while PL would first prioritise age, nationality/citizenship and the type of hiring institution as these data are already being collected.

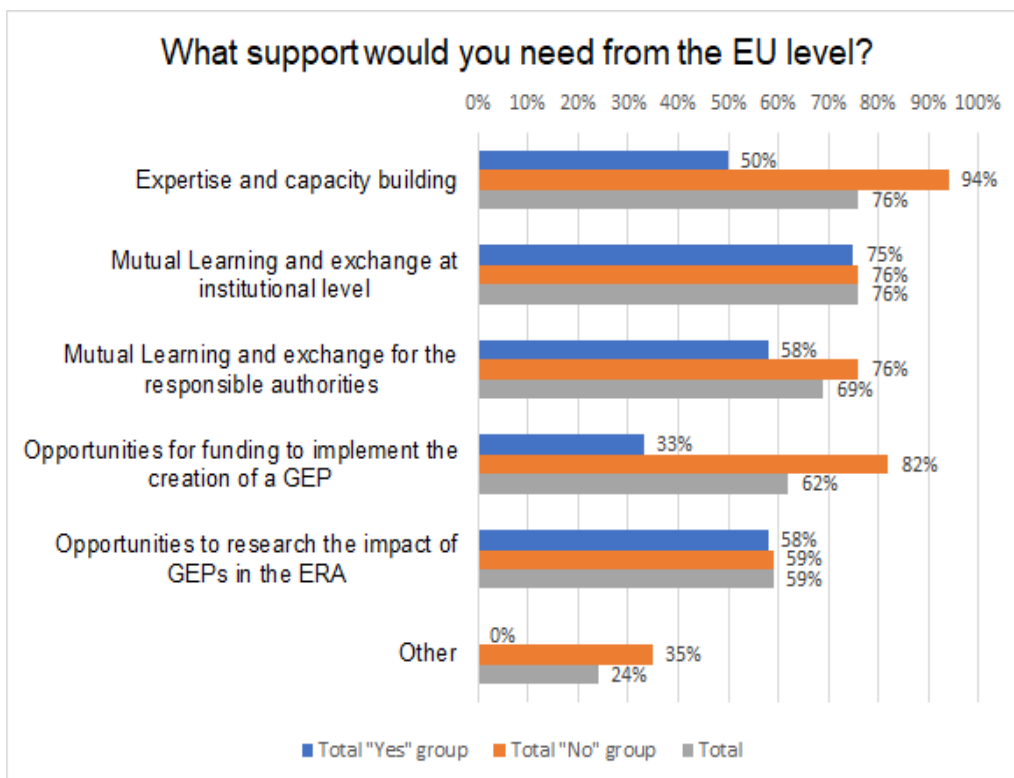
Recommendation 11:

The SWG GRI calls on the Commission to provide detailed guidance on the concept of intersectionality in the context of GEP preparation, implementation and monitoring, and to make that guidance available to MS and AC.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT GEP IMPLEMENTATION AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

This section presents the main findings on needs in terms of support at the EU level that were identified in the SWG GRI survey, ERAC workshop inputs and *#SpeedUpChange* campaign. These findings provide an additional level of detail to the challenges discussed above.

The survey among SWG GRI members shows that the **most important role the EC** can play is to **inform, ensure capacity-building and expertise development** as well as **mutual learning exercises** and opportunities for **funding** to responsible national authorities and institutions that will be impacted by the new GEP requirements. The importance of the need for these provisions varies depending on whether or not there is a GEP requirement at the national level.



Graph 1: Support needed from the EU level

Inform

Two aspects of information provision by the EC have been identified: The EC must, first, ensure a **common definition of GEPs applicable across the EU and AC** and second, **inform MS and AC** in a clear manner about the existing requirements for GEPs in different national contexts and the criteria and building blocks of the GEPs requirement for Horizon Europe and just do so through wide information campaigns and the production of guidelines or templates with minimum content requirements. In the ERAC workshop inputs, EE highlighted the importance of good communication on the activities and services of the Knowledge and Support Facility to reach target groups, as they will be dependent on Swafs funding to pursue the implementation of GEPs.

Provide capacity building, expertise and funding

The SWG GRI survey shows that **countries that do not have a GEP requirement at the national level** are more in **need of expertise and capacity building from the EU level** (16 countries out of 17 or 94%) and of **opportunities for funding to implement the creation of a GEP** (14 countries or 82%) than countries that do have a GEP requirement at the national level (6 countries out of 12 or 50% for the first and 33% for the second). SWG GRI members have suggested that the EC mobilise funds for countries or regions that need extra support to meet the GEP requirements (e.g. through the New Cohesion Policy). It should be noted that some countries indicate they are willing to set up National Contact Points or Coordination and Support Action projects (HU, MT) for the purpose of drawing up and implementing GEPs. Some also highlight the important role of the EC and SWG GRI in promoting this issue but also note that discussions should be held in the broader ERAC level for more impact. This idea was also reflected in the ERAC workshop inputs.

Although support is needed at the EU level, some MS believe that the ultimate responsibility should reside within the GEP implementing organisations themselves. HU suggested that the EU body in charge of GEPs implementation could subcontract local info points with knowledge of the national landscape, needs and obstacles, which are then better placed to facilitate setting up and implementing GEPs in the country.

Provide mutual learning exercises

Countries with and without a GEP requirement alike show the **same interest in mutual learning and exchange at the institutional level** (76%). This has also been supported by the written inputs provided to the ERAC workshop guiding questions. Several countries suggested creating a platform supported by the EC to exchange information on the development, implementation, and monitoring of GEPs and where existing GEPs could be accessible as a source of inspiration. MT emphasised the importance of exchange between smaller countries with more comparable R&I systems. When it comes to mutual learning and exchange among the **responsible authorities, countries without a GEP requirement** at the national level show more interest than countries with a GEP requirement in place (76% vs 58%). This echoes the important need for capacity-building and expertise at the EU level, as national authorities in less advanced countries may lack the gender expertise to develop, implement and monitor GEPs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The SWG GRI survey shows that 59% of MS and AC showed an interest in **opportunities to research the impact of GEPs in the ERA**. This last aspect would be beneficial for many countries as an additional argument to convince R&I stakeholders to adopt GEPs at the national level. In the written input for the ERAC workshop questions, NL suggested creating a reporting mechanism for implementation to push countries to go beyond just adopting a GEP. This reporting could be a part of *She Figures*. SE advocated for a follow-up mechanism at the EU level and specified the need to differentiate between the criteria and follow-up mechanisms for RPOs and those for RFOs.

Other needs

CY, DE and IT suggested that GEPs be mandatory for Horizon Europe as well as for other EU instruments in an effort to push the gender equality agenda further at the national level. IL expressed interest in all the needs mentioned above but only if they are optional for associated countries.

These findings are supported by the input for the 2021 #SpeedUpChange campaign (Campanini Vilhena et al 2021). The qualitative analysis of recommendations related to GEPs shows that a large number of posts stressed the urgency of providing resources and opportunities to specifically research the impact of GEPs and generate knowledge on the evaluation of GE actions. This highlights the need for studying the real impact of initiatives put in place. The assessment and generation of knowledge about the real impact of GEPs is connected to a variety of other needs, including the appointment of GE expert officers who monitor processes of change within institutions, awareness-raising, training and capacity building, provision of resources, having clear rules and regulations governing GEP implementation, and provision of direct financial support for GEP design and implementation. The last recommendation is particularly in evidence in tweets coming from the countries where the GEP requirement is not in place.

ANNEX 1: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender Equality Plans among SWG GRI members: an assessment

Dear colleagues,

As you know, a Task Force on Gender Equality Plans has been created to map the situation on GEPs in public and private R&I organisations, funding organisations and national public authorities in SWG GRI members. With this questionnaire, we intend to assess what is in place at the national level, how many institutions have GEPs in each SWG GRI country but also what are the needs and obstacles in making GEPs happen.

We kindly ask you to answer the survey thoroughly in order to get the most accurate mapping. Indeed, the European Commission will use our results to feed the analysis for the She Figures 2021.

The expected outcomes of this questionnaire are the following:

- the production of recommendations for SWG GRI members
- contribution to the development of indicators for She Figures 2021.

There are 43 questions but they do not apply to all respondents. The time to fill in this questionnaire will vary greatly depending on each member's situation (between 10 minutes and an hour).

The deadline for the survey completion is **15 January 2021**.

There are 43 questions in this survey.

Contact Information

Please, provide the relevant information. *

Part 1.A - Gender equality plans requirements at the national level

The first part of the survey is dedicated to requirements related to gender equality plans at the national level and their implementation. This first sub-section surveys the existence (or non-existence) of gender equality plans at the national level for different institutions as well as the bases for their requirement.

Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level? *

Please choose **all** that apply:

- Public HEIs
 Private HEIs
 Public RPOs
 Public RFOs
 Public services
 Private sector companies with a certain number of employees
 National public authorities (e.g. ministries, research foundations, etc.)
 No, there are no requirements at national level for any institutions
 Other:

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for public HEIs? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency/structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Public HEIs' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

- Law
 National policy
 Agreement between national authority and HEIs
 National award / certification system
 Core grant funding requirement
 Competitive research funding requirement
 None
Other:

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for private HEIs? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency/structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Private HEIs' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Law	
<input type="checkbox"/> National policy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between national authority and HEIs	
<input type="checkbox"/> National award / certification system	
<input type="checkbox"/> Core grant funding requirement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive research funding requirement	
<input type="checkbox"/> None	
Other:	

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for public research performing organisations (RPOs)? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency/structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Public RPOs' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Law	
<input type="checkbox"/> National policy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between national authority and RPOs	
<input type="checkbox"/> National award / certification system	
<input type="checkbox"/> Core grant funding requirement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive research funding requirement	
<input type="checkbox"/> None	
Other:	

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for public research funding organisations (RFOs)? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency/structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Public RFOs' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Law	
<input type="checkbox"/> National policy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between national authority and RFOs	
<input type="checkbox"/> National award / certification system	
<input type="checkbox"/> Core grant funding requirement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive research funding requirement	
<input type="checkbox"/> None	
Other:	

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for public services? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency /structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Public services' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National policy	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between national authority and public services	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National award / certification system	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Core grant funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive research funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="text"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for private sector companies with a certain number of employees? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency/structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Private sector companies with a certain number of employees' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National policy	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between national authority and private companies	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National award / certification system	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Core grant funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive research funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="text"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for national public authorities? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency/structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'National public authorities (e.g. ministries, research foundations, etc.)' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National policy	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National award / certification system	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Core grant funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive research funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="text"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	

e.g. ministries, research foundations, etc.

What is/are the bases for the requirement(s) for the "other" specified above? Please tick all relevant answers and provide us with additional framework conditions governing the GEP requirement (title, link, implementing decree/agency/structure, etc.) *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

((A1_SQ007.NAOK == "Y"))

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National policy	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement between national authorities and "other"	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> National award / certification system	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Core grant funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive research funding requirement	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="text"/>
Other: <input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	

If none, does your country plan to establish a requirement for a GEP in the near future?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any insititutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

This question is mandatory. Please check one answer and comment.

Part 1.B - Detailed questions about the GEPs implementation

This second sub-section applies to countries that have GEPs in place at national level and surveys their implementation.

Are there in your national system requirements related to the GEP in terms of building blocks, areas of action, and target audiences? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was NOT 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any insititutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
 No

Building blocks (e.g. public document, dedicated resources, data collection and monitoring, training and capacity building...)

Areas of action (e.g. gender-based violence and sexual harassment, diversity in terms of gender, race, geographic location, age, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, social background, etc. in decision-making bodies and leadership positions, the integration of a gender dimension in research and teaching contents, international cooperation in STI...)

Target audiences (e.g. top management, academic staff, early-career women researchers, students...)

Please describe and specify for each type of institution in question. *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '12 [AB1]' (Are there in your national system requirements related to the GEP in terms of building blocks, areas of action, and target audiences?)

Please write your answer here:

Does the responsible authority provide guidelines to institutions? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was NOT 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any insitutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Please specify for each type of institution in question. *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '14 [AB3]' (Does the responsible authority provide guidelines to institutions?)

Please write your answer here:

Are there support structures in place to support institutions in developing and implementing a GEP? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was NOT 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any insitutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Which ones? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '16 [AB5]' (Are there support structures in place to support institutions in developing and implementing a GEP?)

Please write your answer here:

Please specify for each type of institution in question.

Does the responsible authority make additional national funding available to support the implementation of GEPs? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was NOT 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any insitutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Please provide more information. *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:

Answer was 'Yes' at question '18 [AB7]' (Does the responsible authority make additional national funding available to support the implementation of GEPs?)

Please write your answer here:

Specify for each type of institution in question.

Is there a formal structure for monitoring and evaluation reporting to ensure that the GEPs are implemented? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was NOT 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any institutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Which ones? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Yes' at question '20 [AB9]' (Is there a formal structure for monitoring and evaluation reporting to ensure that the GEPs are implemented?)

Please write your answer here:

Please specify for each type of institution in question.

Are there sanctions if the GEP is not adopted? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was NOT 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any institutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

Which ones? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Yes' at question '22 [AB11]' (Are there sanctions if the GEP is not adopted?)

Please write your answer here:

Please specify for each type of institution in question.

Are there incentives for the institutions for the following aspects: *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was NOT 'No, there are no requirements at national level for any institutions' at question '2 [A1]' (Is there a requirement for the following institutions to have a gender equality plan (GEP) in place at the national level?)

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment:

- to develop a GEP
- to implement a GEP
- to monitor the implementation of a GEP
- No incentives.

Please describe the incentives in the comment sections and specify for each type of institution in question.

Part 2 – Assessment of the proportion of institutions with gender equality plans in each country

In this 2nd part, we will assess how many public and/or private higher education institutions, public research organisations and public research funding organisations have adopted and implemented a gender equality plan in each SWG GRI country, whether they are a requirement at the national level or not.

How many public HEIs are there in your country in 2020? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's public HEIs have adopted a GEP, whether mandatory or not? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's public HEIs are currently implementing a GEP? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

If manageable, could you provide us with a list of public HEIs that have a GEP in place and/or direct links to their GEPs if they are publicly available? If your country has too many of them, could you provide us with a selection of the most relevant ones? *

Please write your answer here:

Write "NA" if your country's public HEIs did not formulate or implement any GEP.

How many private HEIs are there in your country in 2020? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's private HEIs have adopted a GEP, whether mandatory or not? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's private HEIs are currently implementing a GEP? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

If manageable, could you provide us with the list of the private HEIs that have a GEP in place and/or direct link to their GEPs if they are publicly available? If there are too many of them, could you provide us with a selection of the most relevant ones? *

Please write your answer here:

Write "NA" if your country's private HEIs did not formulate or implement any GEP.

How many public research organisations are there in your country in 2020? *

Please write your answer here:

Here, public research organisations refer specifically to research-focused institutions, not to higher education institutions. Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's public research organisations have adopted a GEP, whether mandatory or not? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's public research organisations are currently implementing a GEP? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

If manageable, could you provide us with the list of public research organisations that have a GEP in place and/or direct link to their GEPs if they are publicly available? If there are too many of them, could you provide us with a selection of the most relevant ones? *

Please write your answer here:

Write "NA" if your country's public research organisations did not formulate or implement any GEP.

How many public research funding organisations are there in your country in 2020? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's public research funding organisations have adopted a GEP, whether mandatory or not? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

How many of your country's public research funding organisations are currently implementing a GEP? *

Please write your answer here:

Please answer with digits. If none, write 0. If you do not know, write "don't know".

If manageable, could you provide us with the list of public research funding organisations that have a GEP in place and/or direct link to their GEPs if they are publicly available? If there are too many of them, could you provide us with a selection of the most relevant ones? *

Please write your answer here:

Write "NA" if your country's public research funding organisations did not formulate or implement any GEP.

Part 3 – Countries’ needs and obstacles at national level

This 3rd and last part of the survey aims to identify the needs and obstacles of SWG GRI members in adopting and implementing gender equality plans at the national level.

What are the three most important needs at the state level (national authority) to support GEP implementation at the institutional level in private and public R&I institutions, funding organisations and national authorities? *

What are the three main obstacles? *

What support would you need from the EU level? *

Please choose all that apply and provide a comment.

- Expertise and capacity building
- Mutual learning and exchange at institutional level
- Mutual learning and exchange for the responsible authorities
- Opportunities for funding to implement the creation of a GEP
- Opportunities to research the impact of GEPs in the ERA

Other:

Thank you very much for your collaboration! We will be in touch soon with the results.
12.03.2021 – 09:17

Submit your survey.
Thank you for completing this survey.

ANNEX 2: THREE QUESTIONS FOR THE ERAC WORKSHOP

As a follow up to the ERAC workshop organised by the trio Presidencies on 15 March 2021, SWG GRI members were requested to provide written input to the three questions prepared for the workshop.

- How do you see your role as a Member State for advancing this ERA priority?
 - Which issues do you see as most pressing in relation to the development of inclusive gender equality plans from the perspective of your national R&I and higher education systems?
For instance:
 - Which intersectional aspects do you see as priority issues to be addressed?
 - Which actions could best help to address geographical inclusiveness?
 - How can the private sector be involved?
 - Which other challenges, in terms of process or contents, do you see?
 - How could the EC best support Member States in advancing in the preparation, and implementation, of inclusive gender equality plans?
-