



ACT Matching Events

Summary report:

Matching Event on Decision-Making –

**CoPs and Collaborative Action: Gender Equality in Decision-Making
in R&I (Day 1) &
National Policy and Institutional Measures for Gender Balance in
Decision-Making and Leadership Positions in R&I (Day 2)**

14th and 16th of October 2020

14:00-16:00 (Brussels time)

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Decision-Making Matching Event – Agenda:

Wednesday, 14th of October 2020

14:00-16:00 (Brussels time)

14:00-14:10	Welcome and Planning – Rachel Palmén (Notus) and María Caprile (Notus)
14:10-14:25	GenBUDGET CoPs approach to gender budgeting and progress to date. Finnborg S. Steinþórsdóttir and Laufey Axelsdóttir (University of Iceland)
14:25-14:40	FORGEN: Research Funders CoP: Mitigating bias in the grant evaluation decision-making process. Dr. Rochelle Fritch, Science Foundation Ireland
14:40-14:55	Latin American CoP: Decision-making and institutional change Prof. Gloria Bonder, Director of the Department of Gender, Society and Policies of FLACSO, Argentina; coordinator of UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, S&T in LAC and the online Master Program on Gender, Society and Policies.
14:55-15:05	Break
15:05-15:20	AKKA – a gender-integrated leadership programme Prof. Tomas Brage (Lund University)
15:20-15:50	Discussion: Where to go from here?
16:50-17:00	Wrap-up and summary

Friday, 14th of October 2020

14:00-16:00 (Brussels time)

14:00-14:10	Welcome and Planning – Rachel Palmén (Notus) and María Caprile (Notus)
14:10-14:25	National legislative and policy measures Marcela Linková, Co-author of the Report on the Implementation of Targets: Follow-Up on the 2018 Guidance Recommendations; Chair of the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation; Centre for Gender and Science – Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences
14:25-14:40	Ireland: Promoting Gender Balance in Decision-Making as part of a Comprehensive National Gender Equality Policy in Higher Education Ross Woods, Senior Manager Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality at Higher Education Authority
14:40-14:55	Changing Election Rules: Ghent University Tine Brouckaert, Centre for Research on Culture and Gender; Gender Policy Advisor at Ghent University
14:55-15:05	Break
15:05-15:20	Training for gender sensitive decision-making and leadership María Lopez Belloso & Leire Gartzia (University of Deusto)
15:20-15:50	Discussion: Where to go from here?
16:50-17:00	Wrap-up and summary

Day 1: CoPs and Collaborative Action: Gender Equality in Decision-Making in R&I

Introduction

(María Caprile and Rachel Palmén)

This session, that followed the Plenary Session focused on sharing insights in the work of the ACT Communities of Practice (CoPs) and Collaborative Action: Gender Equality in Decision-Making in R&I. We learned about the objectives, approaches and progress of three ACT CoPs (GenBUDGET, FORGEN and the Latin American CoP) in actions taken to counteract gender bias in decision-making.

The ACT GenBUDGET CoP – Approach to gender budgeting and progress to date

(Finnborg S. Steinþórsdóttir and Laufey Axelsdóttir, University of Iceland)

The background of the CoP: The roots of the CoP go back to the [GARCIA project](#), where the University of Iceland was responsible for the work package on gender budgeting. To continue this work, they came up with the idea to make a new CoP on how to tackle gender biases in decision-making by the means of gender budgeting.

What is gender budgeting? It is a relatively new strategy to advance gender equality and efficiency of policy making in research performing organisations. It acknowledges that financial managerial decisions are not gender neutral or objective technical procedures. This strategy supports awareness raising in regard to the impacts of policy and resource allocation and change mechanisms to improve gender equality. Gender budgeting also aims at promoting structural change.

What are the objectives of the CoP? The GenBudget CoP aims at:

- Developing **best practices on Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)**, because the idea is to build on GIA and take actions to act on the assessment.
- Providing **knowledge on the gendered impact and outcomes** of the financial and managerial mechanisms at research organisations for the community.
- Developing ways to **counteract gendered outcomes** of financial and managerial mechanisms.
- Developing **shared knowledge, resources and practices** on how to engage effectively in gender budgeting activities.
- Developing **knowledge and “how-to” counteract resistances**. Enabling change is often difficult, so the aim is to provide guidance on how to act in the environment you’re in.
- Deepening the knowledge and expertise on how to **implement gender budgeting** in research performing organisations.

What is GenBudget’s approach? GenBudget builds on of the GARCIA project (a map of financial mechanisms on different levels (states, universities, etc.)). The idea of this CoP is to do targeted implementation projects. CoP members are encouraged to think about the local conditions and circumstances at their institution as well as targeted projects that are manageable and provides data and statistics. Based on that they aim to:

- Do a GIA of this targeted project
- Formulate actions and to define objectives
- These actions should then be implemented
- In the future an evaluation of the outcomes of these targeted implementation projects is planned

 Overall aim of the CoP: Develop shared goals and how the CoP can work towards integrating gender into all policy and budgetary decisions

The idea of a CoP on gender budgeting has been presented at the first [synergy conference of the ACT project in Brussels in February 2019](#) and received a very positive response. The CoP did not limit the membership to a specific European region and to have knowledge or experience on gender budgeting was not a mandatory to become a member. The only condition was to be committed to the CoP and its work, to participate and engage in the CoPs activities.

The purpose of the CoP: 16 individuals and 10 participating organisations are part of the CoP right now, from different regions in Europe. In order to create knowledge on gender budgeting there are some things in the making. Highlighted in this presentation were (1) Finding suitable projects in each organisation, (2) Tackling challenges and barriers and (3) Supportive factors.

- (1) Finding suitable projects: This has been easy and difficult at the same time because some already had a good knowledge on gender budgeting, whereas others had to start from scratch. Because of that, the CoP members are at different progression levels. Everyone involved in the CoP are gender equality experts or have worked in one way or another in relation to gender equality. The knowledge created in the GARCIA project has been very useful in this context. CoP members have been asked to start with realistic and manageable projects e.g. looking at the gender pay gap, funding environment, etc.
- (2) Tackling challenges and barriers: Some CoP members had difficulties in the beginning of their work, due to a lack of knowledge on gender budgeting. Some even faced resistance from decision-makers who blocked implementation progresses. Another barrier that emerged is the Covid-19 situation due to which meetings had to be postponed, stress and workload have increased as well as care responsibilities. People are also worried that gender equality projects might be cut due to financial cutbacks.
- (3) Supportive factors: The support given by the ACT project has been important for the CoP to progress. The [CoP website](#) has created unity in the CoP and fostered exchange between CoP members. Having a CoP facilitator allows CoP members to not worry about administrative tasks. Meeting face-to-face still is a great opportunity for CoP members to build trust and a sense of togetherness. Furthermore, being part of the CoP pushes projects forward because decision makers consider it a plus to be part of a EU-project.

Funding Organisations for Gender Equality (FORGEN) CoP: Mitigating bias in the grant evaluation decision-making process

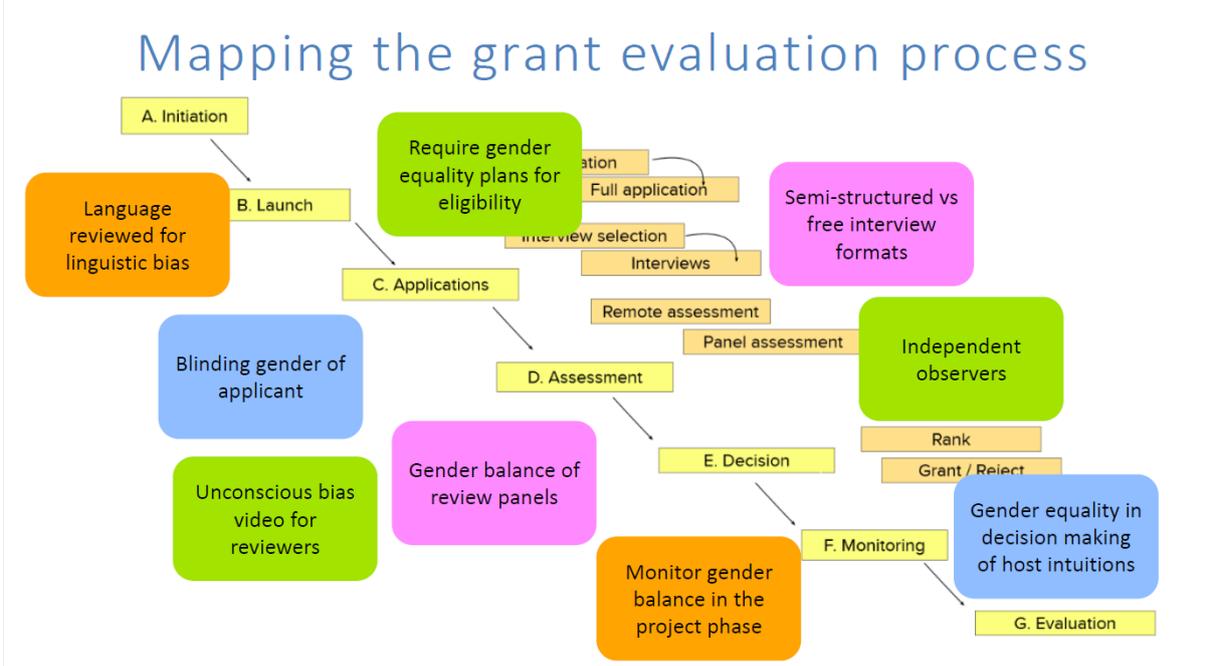
(Rochelle Fritch, Science Foundation Ireland)

What is [FORGEN CoP](#)? FORGEN is a CoP of Research & Innovation (R&I) funding agencies committed to the goal of monitoring and improving the implementation of gender equality in R&I funding in the European Research Area and beyond by bringing together gender equality practitioners in Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) to promote knowledge sharing and best practice. The CoP has 16 international funding agencies as members to date with the agencies being different types of funding (e.g. innovation or academic). This CoP started from scratch, so there hasn't been prior collaboration.

Why focus on research funding? Funders play a critical role in addressing gender quality in the R&I landscape as equal opportunities in research are linked to success rates and participation in research funding. The evaluation and success of research grants is critical to the success of a researcher, which in turn affects promotional opportunities. RFOs need to ensure that decision-making, grant evaluation processes and post award policies support gender equality throughout their activities.

What is FORGEN focusing on? The aims and work of FORGEN focus on reducing bias in the grant evaluation process, intersectionality (e.g. including diversity), sex and gender dimension in research, leadership and sustainability as well as collecting and monitoring gender equality data. Each topic is being covered by one working group within the CoP.

Reducing bias in the grant evaluation process: We know that this is the core area of business of funders and to learn about this, the process needs to be defined. The FORGEN CoP has been looking at this and did a mapping workshop. In this workshop, they defined the stages of the process, looked at the similarities and differences, mapped the gender equality measures implemented and then identified gaps in their knowledge. The workshop took place on three days which unfortunately couldn't take place in person due to Covid-19.



Graphic provided by Rochelle Fritch

By mapping this process, the CoP learned about how different processes and programmes are implemented in funding agencies and identified learning gaps. The CoP is working to bring this knowledge together and to support best practice in gender equality in R & I funding. For the future, they would like to expand their community and include more funding agencies as well as to collaborate with experts in the field, that are working towards best practice in this field.

If people working at a funding agency or experts in gender equality in funding are interested in joining the FORGEN CoP, please contact Rochelle Fritch (Rochelle.fritch@sfi.ie).

Gender equality policies in Higher Education: Learning from experience for sustainable implementations

(Gloria Bonder, FLACSO, Argentina)

The Latin American CoP (LAC CoP) is the youngest of the ACT CoPs, mostly focusing on institutionalisation of gender equality plans, programmes or policies in universities and research institutions. Twelve universities form part of the CoP from different countries in Latin America in different stages of institutionalisation of gender equality plans.

When deciding to work on institutionalisation it was clear for them that they needed to analyse the enabling conditions that allows, promotes and makes it possible to institutionalise those plans:

Enabling conditions

- Increase in female enrollment in Higher Education institutions (last 3 decades) (women: 55% students).
- Gender Studies courses or seminars in many universities since the early 80.
- Regional growth of the feminist movement. Activism against gender-based violence, for legal abortion, GLBT marriage and gender identity laws.
- Increase and active participation of the student movement demanding public education, against discrimination and participation in institutional decisions.
- Promotion of gender equality in national and regional Agendas (ECLAC) and conventions. Many laws on women's rights and gender equality have been passed in many countries.
- Research and education programs on gender studies (some countries).
- Exchange of information between LA and European Universities.

Graphic provided by Gloria Bonder

It is important to point out how these factors have already sensitised the universities and research institutions since the 80's in different ways and levels (context matters!). All factors are important but what should be emphasised is the increased and active participation of the students (e.g. feminist movements).

Structural obstacles: There are a lot of different obstacles, such as decreasing budgets or the influence of governmental ideologies, but what should be emphasised is that conservative groups that are against feminism are rising. Another important aspect to be mentioned here is the privatisation of Higher Education institutions and the adoption of corporate values and goals.

Towards a typology of strategies for developing gender equality policies and programs in HE: Strategies in this typology are being adopted at the moment in different universities and

research institutions. The typology constitutes of 'stairs', 'paraglider', 'Conqueror', 'Evangelising', 'The part for the whole' and 'networking'. Without going into much detail, for example it was explained that the stairs stand for step by step arriving to the top of the decision-makers to ask for taking steps towards the institutionalisation. Some of the strategies have been quite successful, but not all. The 'paraglider' on the other hand resembles someone coming to a university without acknowledging that there have been other initiatives and ideas for institutionalisation before and therefore not being tied to and influenced by them. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy, each university is unique as well as each strategy.

Current institutional practices: Some of the practices are just good intentions of the authorities (e.g. having a GEP without budget or human resources), some are just doing it for the institutional image. The adoption of GEPs is often not taken seriously, it is a show-off but not real commitment. Depending on the stage in which the universities are, they are more committed to gender equality. How the universities are acting on gender equality is very diverse, ranging from only good intentions to conviction and commitment.

The Latin American CoP started late in 2019 and met regularly every month (sometimes even twice a month) always with a specific topic to be discussed. They wanted to analyse the process of institutionalisation and how to move forward based on their experiences and taking into account the regional context as well as the characteristics of each university. They found that:

- The GEPs are a process under construction, advancing at different speeds according to the context (political, social and institutional)
- Most of the universities have, as the core of their work, prevention and attention to gender-based violence and discrimination
- They aim at sensitising students and teachers on gender inequalities, which is one of the main objectives
- Few programmes are implementing measures to reverse gender inequality in aspects such as recruitment and promotion of women professors as well as to achieve equality in decision-making positions
- Some initiatives are working on mainstreaming gender in curriculum and teaching practices

What are the basic conditions to strengthen the institutionalisation of gender equality policies in Universities? Budgets and interdisciplinary team work play a big role. The next step is to integrate the gender equality approach in research and in curriculum contents of all disciplines and to adopt a more intersectional approach. The CoP is at the moment preparing for those steps.

Where does the Latin American CoP stand? They have been working really hard in a very supportive context and they learn a lot from each other, which shows that the methodology of the CoP approach is working very well. Although the member institutions are very different and some are very big universities but they are still sharing common goals and strategies. They need to take into account how the political and institutional context is changing and to maintain or increase what they have achieved so far. Collaborations with other initiatives (feminist movement or student movement) are really important to join forces and move forward in order to avoid the GEPs being isolated as well as having an interconnected strategy together with other movements or even NGOs.

Question in the chat: Explanation of the concept of evangelisation when speaking about different gender practices and approaches

This is something most of us have done or are doing: Coming to the universities to sensitise professors, students, the dean etc. and the promise of gender equality making the university a much more friendly environment, a more productive environment. It's a discourse to try to convince someone. A better way would be rather to build on what is already there instead of promising something without recognising what has been there before and is there right now.

AKKA – a gender-integrated leadership programme

(Tomas Brage, Lund University)

The [AKKA](#)-programme is a gender-integrated leadership programme. There have been five programmes from 2004 to 2014 whereof the first two programmes have been offered to women only, the other three to both, men and women. 108 women and 37 men have been reached at the Lund university. The success of this programme was that Lund university moved from having the worst numbers (only one women dean) to having the best numbers (five women deans). Furthermore, there are now AKKA member in 80 boards.

How did the programme start? The AKKA programme emerged because Lund Universities' numbers were under the national average of female deans and the intention was to "fix the numbers" (in 2003/2004). In the "remits" of what they were supposed to do, they trained women as leaders as the focus was on "fixing the women". Luckily, the project was given free hands as well as a healthy budget, so they turned the focus on "fixing the institutions (and knowledge)". At the time, this was the only leadership training at the university, so if you wanted training on leadership, this was the one you had to take.

Steering AKKA – people: The leaders of the AKKA programme are Professor Inger Lövkrona, former dean and professor of ethnology as well as an expert on gender; Kajsa Widén, HR and responsible for equal opportunities, Cecilia Agrell, HR as well as a reference group of experts, including the presenter, Tomas Brage.

Steering AKKA – results: AKKA focused on structures and cultures and how they can be changed. By using a "post-equity approach", they focused on structures that reproduce gender inequity as organisations tend to maintain a gendered social order. Based on gender research and using discrimination as an explanation of vertical segregation. Parallel to work by de Vries and others in Australia, AKKA became "bifocal" program, aiming at individual and structural change; not only making leaders but a source of agents of change with leadership skills of course, which is why men are included.

AKKA questions: How does gender operate in the academy? In what way is leadership gender-marked? Do men and women have the same opportunities and influence? How do we change discriminating structures? How do we implement an intersectional perspective? When men entered – how do we understand masculinities?

AKKA pedagogics: One premise was, that leadership can be learned by acquiring knowledge on:

- Organisation
- Leadership (the different styles, cultures, gendered stereotypes)
- Your own competences (what do you need to know? How? Why should you need/ have these competences?)
- Your own notions, values and attitudes (gender bias)

AKKA short term summary: Through the AKKA program, the proportion of women in leading positions as well as the visibility of women as potential leaders increased and gender awareness among leaders (men and women) has been raised. More networking and cooperation have been a side effect, but is really important (both, within and across faculties). Furthermore, it started a discussion on the organisation of the university and its role in the

society as well as learning on how to handle resistance (especially when men entered the programme).

AKKA long term data: AKKA was discontinued in 2014. In 2020, seven of the eight faculties have a man as dean (one of them graduated from AKKA) and only one a woman dean. A good number on the other hand is, that 11 of 23 pro- or vice-deans are women (eight former AKKA participants). Furthermore, the pro-rector of Lund university is a woman and one of the three vice-rectors is a woman as well (and former AKKA participant). The new rector that has been appointed out of three women and three men nominees is a man, even though two women and only one man have been shortlisted.

AKKA long term – what happened? After the discontinuation, Lund university is now (2020) back on the same level as in 2004 concerning deans. Men have more or less taken back “their” positions of power because this topic wasn’t on the agenda anymore and it became a “revolving door” for women. The number of pro-and vice-deans increased – which has been beneficial for women, but this still shows a well-known pattern: Women cluster in positions subordinate to men, which is a dead end, because: Deans and not vice-deans will become vice-chancellors and pro-vice chancellors have to go to another university to step up.

Post-AKKA – what happened? When AKKA was wound down, the discussion about women and leadership was no longer on the agenda of the university, resulting in women “disappearing”. The short-term effects on the gender (im)balance that came along with the discontinuation of AKKA, are more than evident. In the long term, the effects can’t be measured very well in regard to qualitative results. What needs to be taken into account is that structural change takes time and is not easy to measure/ prove. Another question that has to be asked if maybe women took leadership but not seniority to continue making a change?

Conclusions: A gender-integrated leadership programme, like AKKA, provides results, if it keeps running! In conclusion, this means that it has to be institutionalised, permanent and part of mainstreaming. It is not a project that can end after some time and have manifested results. On a positive note, it can be said that AKKA has paved the way for change.

Questions:

-How do you think AKKA can be institutionalised? By the continuation of the programme, it will become an integral part of the agenda. Furthermore, it has to be the only leadership programme, not in competition with other programmes.

-Do you know how many of the women who became leaders were from abroad (not Swedish)? The deans were all Swedish, but the concrete numbers need to be looked up.

-What was the rationale to discontinue AKKA? Other priorities gain importance, neo-liberalism, change of HR representatives. Furthermore, AKKA has always been seen as a project and didn’t make it into the main budget. It’s not really a rationale, it’s just change.

Discussion:

Talking about best practices, the session closed with a plenary discussion about the experiences of the ACT CoPs and effective collaborative strategies to try and promote gender equality in decision-making in R&I. It was pointed out that:

1) What has worked well?

- Leverage to be had from support provided by CoPs from outside the institution – important tool for providing internal support and arguments
- By being part of a network, member institutions can draw from a lot of resources and knowledge even though it might not be the biggest one with the most prestige
- The network also allows institutions to get to know the work of other institutions, which can be very inspirational
- CoP members benefit from the network, to learn from others
- It is important to include actors from different levels (e.g. students) to put pressure on decision-makers on the higher levels
- Including executive boards and deans to have their support and to introduce the work of the CoPs but also the other way around, that CoPs provide support and inspiration
- Collaboration beyond the institution is one of the key aspects for CoP progress

2) What has not worked and why?

- Projects like AKKA might have caused not only a backlash but also forelash – decision-makers fear the same development, which directly influences the numbers and results in non-action and resistance
- Power structures/ imbalances might be reproduced due to the specific regulations in an institution
- One worry is what happens if project/ support is discontinued

3) Where to go from here?

- CoPs have an added value, which shows that these CoPs are really needed. People realise that they are not alone with their problem and that others have similar problems. Furthermore, it gives them the power to move forward, because if they don't feel alone, they're encouraged to get active.
- We need to have a discourse/ statement on why gender equality plans and measures are important for an institution and why our work is important

The discussion was very vivid and fruitful. There was a strong consensus regarding the importance of collaboration, networking and the examples provided by the CoPs showed the importance and the impact of CoPs and their work.

Day 2: National Policy and Institutional Measures for Gender Balance in Decision-Making and Leadership Positions in R&I

Introduction:

(Rachel Palmén and María Caprile)

The second day as well started with a quick introduction by corresponding ERA group leaders, Rachel Palmén and María Caprile. After shortly introducing the speakers of this session, they explained the agenda and the timeline of this event.

National legislative and policy measures

(Marcela Linková, Centre for Gender and Science – Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences)

The pandemic has shown what can happen, when women are absent from or are poorly represented in decision-making.

Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation: The SWG has been established in 2017 as part of the advisory structure of the European Research and Innovation Committee and as a successor to the Helsinki Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (1999-2017). It consists of representatives from 24 member states and six associated countries. The SWG provides advice on how to address policy challenges related to gender equality in R&I.

[Report on the Implementation of Targets: Follow-Up on the 2018 Guidance](#)

[Recommendations](#): In 2015 the Council adopted conclusions on Advancing Gender equality in the European Research Area, as the most ambitious document, that we have in Europe committing member states to advancing gender equality actions including seven recommendations. The Council invited member states and relevant authorities to strive for guiding targets for (aiming to reach these targets by 2020):

- A more even gender balance for professors
- Better gender balance in decision-making bodies (in leading scientific and administrative boards, recruitment and promotion committees)
- Encouraging research funding and performing organisations to reach these targets

What has happened so far? As a response to these recommendations, the EC and Helsinki group drafted a report, launched in 2018. This report put forward seven recommendations:

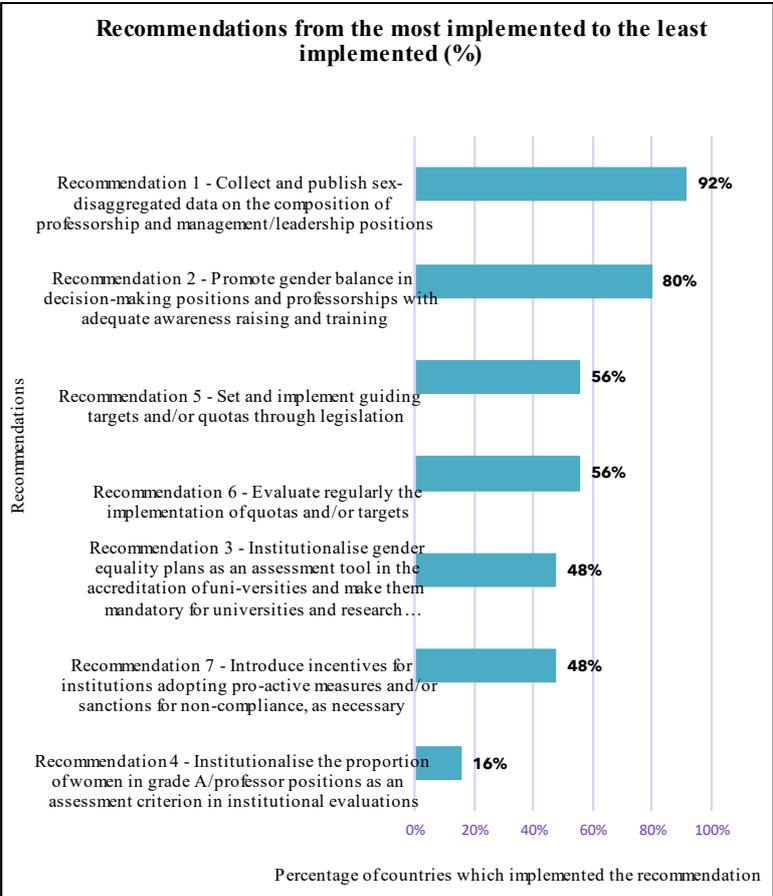
1. Collect and publish **sex-disaggregated data** on the composition of professorship and management/leadership positions.
2. Promote gender balance in decision-making positions and professorships with adequate **awareness-raising and training**.
3. Institutionalise **gender-equality plans as an assessment tool** in the accreditation of universities and make them mandatory for universities and research organisations.
4. Institutionalise the **proportion of women in Grade A/professor positions as an assessment criterion** in institutional evaluations (higher education accreditation, performance contracts with universities).
5. Set and implement guiding targets and/or quotas through **legislation**.
6. **Evaluate** regularly the implementation of quotas and/or targets.
7. Introduce **incentives** for institutions adopting pro-active measures **and/or sanctions** for non-compliance, as necessary.

Provided by Marcela Linková

There are huge existing differences among the member states and uptake wanted to be ensured, so recommending that by 2020 every member state in the EU should have targets wasn't a possibility. Therefore, these recommendations have been designed to change from easier actions to more ambitious ones. In 2020 it was assessed to what extent the member states have implemented these recommendations. 19 member states responded as well as the six associated countries. No response has been received from Italy, Cyprus and Slovakia.

These recommendations range from relatively common things that should be happening to more ambitious ones (e.g. implementing targets and/or quotas through legislation).

The data received is statistics they received are illustrated in the following graph:



Provided by Marcela Linková

In the report it has been highlighted that the differences in the degree of implementation still exist. On a positive note, having statistical sex-disaggregated data has improved and nearly all countries are collecting these data (except Czech Republic). Most countries also promote gender balance in decision-making (including awareness raising and training). Regarding the other five recommendations, the gap between the EU-15 and EU-13 countries. Especially countries in central and eastern Europe with only one or two recommendations in place in contrast to Spain, France, Germany, Sweden and others with five or six in place.

Women in Grade A: A useful indicator? How to work with this indicator? It is the most important indicator for the ERA to assess where a country stands in regard to gender equality. Countries who have most of the recommendations implemented (five or six) have comprehensive National Action Plans in place but these countries have poor numbers when looking at the proportion of women in Grade A. Countries with high proportions of women in Grade A (Bulgaria or Romania for example) on the other hand have no actions to support GE. The proportion of women in Grade A is not suitable as the only or main indicator for GE but needs to be seen in connection with other indicators.

Continued differences between MS-15 and MS-13: GEPs as an assessment criterion has been institutionalised by none of the EU-13 countries. None of the EU-13 countries have furthermore

introduced quotas and targets at the national level except for Slovenia. In regard to GEPs as an eligibility criterion for funding in Horizon Europe, these data have serious implications.

Correlations: Seven of the countries with five or six implemented recommendations are also the countries with the highest number of women on boards. Six countries with three or four recommendations in place are spread in terms of women on boards and as heads of HE institutions and seven countries with only one or two recommendations implemented are equally spread.

Questions:

-The level or the use of the indicator of women in Grade A positions reminds of the Report on Benchmarking of policy measures from a couple of years ago. This basically said that it is not an indicator of GE but the worth/ value of the R&I sector. The bigger/ more powerful they are, the more men they have and the less money the sector moves, the less it's valued and the more women can enter.

Response by Marcela Linková: 'All that glitters is not gold'. We can now look at two decades of actions and policies supporting various aspects and how that changes. What's interesting is to look at where the member states are taking action and how that contributes to the improvement and progress, especially in regard to decision-making positions and how that goes along with women contributing to the decision-making in the sector.

-What was the reaction of the SWG to GEPs becoming an eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe funding?

Response by Marcela Linková: This initiative has been welcomed very much and they are hoping it will be confirmed. Having transition period is really important, maybe around 18 months or even more.

-Which are the main factors that impact all measures?

Response by Marcela Linková: The SWG has not assessed this but this is something that could be looked into further. The member states are taking different approaches to motivate their institutions (more centralised, or rather soft approaches), so it depends on how autonomous or centralised/ decentralised the countries are.

Ireland: Promoting Gender Balance in Decision-Making as part of a Comprehensive National Gender Equality Policy in Higher Education
 (Ross Woods, Higher Education Authority, Ireland)

Background information: In 2016, a ‘National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions’ took place. This review introduced a number of recommendations and proceeded the European level recommendations. The recommendations have been made in a variety of areas in relation to leadership, governance and management as well as how to embed gender equality in an organisation, culture, recruitment and promotion practices, gender action plans as well as introducing the Athena Swan charter in Ireland.

Gender Action Plan 2018-2020: Progress after the mentioned review was quite slow, so they had a second policy document that reinforced the initial recommendations that have been made in 2016 and expanded these. One thing that came out of this Action Plan was the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality in 2019. The aim of this Centre was to ensure sustainable acceleration towards GE in HE institutions in Ireland as well as to advise the Minister of HE on progress, new developments and measures that might be needed in the future for Ireland as well as to oversee a broader framework of GE within HE.

Framework for GE in Irish HE: The framework includes different actions and initiatives:

Framework for Gender Equality in Irish HE



Provided by Ross Woods

What is important to say in regard to this is, that these initiatives are based around collection of data, HE institutions reporting centrally on the progress they’re making and other targeted funding initiatives.

Initiatives that have been introduced on a national level (exemplary):

- (1) HE institutions showing leadership – institutional Action Plans:
Institutions have been asked to define ambitious short, medium and long-term targets regarding the proportion of people of each gender which it aims to have at senior levels (academic and profession, management and support staff).
- (2) Positive Action Interventions:
 - A flexible cascade model has been introduced where the proportion of women and men to be promoted/ recruited is based on the proportion of each gender at the grade immediately below.
 - Another Positive Action Intervention was introducing a minimum of 40% women and 40% men to be full professors. As these are difficult indicators new and additional gender-specific posts have been established
 - One other important recommendation is that all decision-making bodies within Irish HE institutions are gender balanced.
- (3) Leadership:
 - Recommendations have been made in regard to appointments of new presidents, specifically that the final pool of candidates will be gender balanced.
 - Anyone who is appointed to a presidential position within one of the universities would be able to demonstrate leadership experience especially in regard to advancing gender equality.

Centre of Excellence for gender equality: The work of the centre focuses on three main areas such as providing centralised support to the institutions, aiming at making data-driven decisions based on the sex and gender disaggregated data they collect as well as supporting funding initiatives, which are also regulated by the centre.

Data-driven decisions: Annually, they publish a report on 'Higher Education Staff Profiles by Gender', which offers gender disaggregated staff data and informs on key indicators which contribute to the assessment of gender-equality in Irish HE institutions. IT also serves as the baseline from which progress can be measured.

Senior Academic Leadership Initiative: Back in 2018 24% female full professors and it was decided that a significant targeted positive action initiative was needed. Based on collected data, it was shown that the rate of change at the senior levels was slower than on other levels, which is why the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative was introduced, establishing new and additional gender-targeted senior academic leadership posts. These positions (20 this year, funded for ten years) have been awarded to institutions who could demonstrate areas of clear under-representation and need. The applications have been linked to institutional progress on GE.

Monitoring/Reporting: The Centre needs that HE institutions report annually on the progress they're making, the progress of Gender Action Plans needs to be reported as well and the Athena SWAN accreditation is linked to research funding eligibility.

Work at the Institutional Level: A lot of work has been done already by Irish HE institutions, such as having Gender Action Plan in place, having gender balance on Governing Body, Academic Council, Executive Management Teams and 14 HE institutions were awarded with Athena SWAN bronze.

Questions:

-What are the main factors that enabled Ireland to take this very comprehensive policy approach? Was it the timing, the political discourse? What facilitated this comprehensive approach on the national level?

Response by Ross Woods (RW): Two main factors were decisive: 1. The HE authority sits on site of the Ministry of Education, so we're essentially a regulatory body but independent at the same time. It has been initiated by a group of experts, which designed the recommendations. 2. The minister of HE had a particular interest in this area, so the political backing was the most important aspect.

-What was the response of the HE sector in Ireland? Have there been reservations?

Response by RW: There has been some concerns, but the funding came from the centre, so institutions were happy to take extra professorships.

Changing Election Rules: Ghent University

(Tine Brouckaert, Ghent University)

Tine Brouckaert was the gender policy officer at the time that the decision-making rules of Ghent University for the board of governors changed, which was in 2014. The board of governors changed their election rules to achieve a 40% to 60% gender balance representation of its members. As soon as this was implemented, male dominated boards at universities changed and achieved 50/50 representation of both sexes. Important to know is that things that triggered this change were:

- Flemish government: In 2013 the Flemish government issued a binding decree that stipulated that gender balance ranging from one third to two thirds had to be ensured in universities' decision-making and advisory bodies. Ghent University changed its election procedures in response to that. For the highest decision-making bodies, Ghent University aimed at going beyond this legal minimum. They proposed a gender balance target ranging from 40% to 60%.
- EU-directives: The rationale behind this action was that Ghent University wanted to anticipate the EU directive stipulating a gender balance of 40%/60%.
- Female rector: At that time Ghent University had a female rector, that supported this initiative.

How does the election procedure look like? Usually, each of the eleven faculties needed to appoint one candidate from their faculty to form part of the board of governors. In the new election rules, each faculty needs to propose at least one male and one female candidate for the elections. Ghent University did not opt for a dual election system, because even if the female candidate gets elected, the male candidate is forming part of the board of governors.

Outcomes: Universities' boards were male dominated until then. Over the years, the number of female professors at the university increased, but the composition of the boards and the decision-making culture did not change. Before changing the election rules, the number of women on boards ranged from 0-16% and now they have a 50/50 balance. Eight of the eleven faculties supported these new election rules, three faculties on the other hand tried to boycott this change. In the end, the elections were really successful, despite some faculties trying to block these new rules. Changing the election rules made the whole process more democratic, because more people wanted to vote, so they achieved a higher voter turnout.

Questions:

-It seems like it was a popular measure, without much resistance and that people were happy with this change?

Response by Tine Brouckaert: There were people that were not happy with this change. Even though having a female rector, the main decisions were made by male professors and deans, so they received a lot of resistance (explicit and implicit) against this measure. Also, three faculties and their deans tried to boycott this change was significant.

-Do you know if other universities followed your example and applied a similar approach in terms of elections? What has been the role and reception from students point view?

Response by Tine Brouckaert: Students are not so much involved. The change of election rules hasn't had much of an impact on the students' lives, because students are not allowed

to vote (only staff members). When the new rules were implemented, Ghent University was the only European university with such an approach, which might have changed.

Training for gender sensitive decision-making and leadership

(María Lopez Beloso & Leire Gartzia, University of Deusto)

The training for gender sensitive decision-making and leadership is part of the [GEARING ROLES project](#), funded by Horizon 2020 aiming at implementing GEPs and supporting institutions. The project has four main objectives and target areas: (1) Female Career Progression, (2) Education and research, (3) Leadership and decision-making and (4) Promotion of GE in Research Organisations and Key Stakeholders for the reinforcement of ERA.

The project's goals regarding leadership: (1) Encourage the equal representation and participation in leadership and decision-making, (2) Analyse and redefine leadership models from a gender perspective and (3) Support awareness raising and behavioural changes towards inclusive leadership.

How is the project going to achieve this? First, by providing inspiration. In order to do that, a mapping of initiatives regarding gender sensitive leadership in different sectors and countries has been conducted and transformed into an interactive tool, where different initiatives can be searched for by country. Secondly, the project wants to promote knowledge exchange and sharing of experiences among those institutions that have implemented or are implementing GEPs. In order to do so, they facilitate meetings between the institutions to discuss different topics. In this context they have specific sessions on training programmes for gender sensitive decision-making and leadership. Finally, they developed a training program for gender sensitive decision-making within the project, that consists of two different parts: Webinars (open and closed) with invited experts on this topic and how to translate the discussions into practice.

Promote knowledge exchange and sharing of experiences among GEP implementors leaders: The workshops in the pairing events (when two or three GEP implementing institutions meet) are a really critical point because it really helps improve the implications of the leaders, which was one of the main objectives. The workshop consisted of six sessions tackling different topics, such as an overview of gender in leadership, gender bias in decision-making, gender stereotypes and leadership styles.

Develop a training programme for gender sensitive decision-making and leadership: This includes open webinars, closed webinars and a two-day leadership programme. In the closed webinars, leaders were encouraged to think about ways how to implement this theoretical assumptions and reflections. The two-day leadership programme on the other hand was specifically for women, which is part of a mentoring programme with female leaders.

Outcomes and conclusions: When working with leaders, it is important to include a multidimensional approach (individual, group, institutional). Especially in relation to one of the goals of the project (awareness raising) this is important, because in general it is very low, so people in managerial positions are not really committed to the topic and that they are critical change agents that need to be convinced and that they recognise that we need to work on this topic. The objective of redefining leadership is also really important, because leadership is connected with the institutional strategy and promoting changes. In terms of the objective of equal representation, they found that there are many resistances (e.g., against quota) and some leaders don't even want to talk about what could be a positive outcome. Before talking

about equal representation, it is really important that leaders first see and recognise how important it is to have equal representation for example in regard to the public image.



Outcomes and conclusions:



MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH
(individual, group, institutional)

1. Equal representation

Identify resistances (e.g., quota) & levels (explicit/implicit)
Set organizational objectives (public image, legislation)

2. Redefine leadership

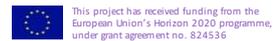
Cultural change / OB approaches
Link to Strategy / Organizational goals

3. Raise awareness

Raise individual awareness (Top-down / Bottom-up)
Demonstrate Unconscious Bias (experiential)

Role of managers in GEP:

Public support / Org. priority / Ensure shared understanding



Provided by María López Belloso and Leire Gartzia

Questions:

-Have you found it affective that institutions are working together and not tackling decision-making and leadership themselves?

Response by María López Belloso: This is a part of the project that has been affected a lot by the Covid-19 pandemic because it was important to have these events as face-to-face events, so the ones that have already been held were really successful. It is not just the workshop that is important but also the social aspect of going on a trip together. The other activities have now been translated into virtual activities but the workshops should take place face-to-face, so they have been postponed.

-It is really interesting that the project not only stresses the number of women but also gender competence of decision-making bodies and leaders. Were the awareness raising activities directly targeted to women or men and women?

Response by María López Belloso: Only the two-day workshop was for women only (for current and future female leaders). The other activities are for current leaders, both men and women. The project also tries to make that gender balanced.

Response by Leire Gartzia: We are having the two dimensions, sex and gender, so the one goal is to increase the number of women and the other is about changing the system.

Breakout sessions:

The second day of the decision-making Matching Event closed with a discussion in small breakout sessions addressing how a GEP can encourage gender sensitive decision-making and leadership and how collaboration between institutions can impact gender sensitive decision-making and leadership. The discussion was very fruitful. The main aspects that have been discussed, were:

- Changing the numbers of women in decision-making is not enough, but a good first step, which then should be followed by culture change. Those two aspects should run ideally parallel.
- Not only changing the number, but also changing the leadership model, so they become gender sensitive.
- There is a clear need for more discussion and reflection on the institutional level because decision-making is related to the ideas of academia.
- Stepping away from the one size fits all idea regarding leadership.
- Changing the definition of leadership by broadening the understanding of it.
- Infusing a more feminist vision in leadership and deconstructing of stereotypes.
- Change processes (even when being part of programmes or initiatives like DORA or Athena SWAN) are very difficult.
- Having GEPs in place gives structures and decision-making that wouldn't normally be available to ECRs and they can have a voice through this new structure (formalising structures for ECRs to get involved).
- Being part of international collaborations and having international examples provides a lot of leverage. These examples can help with forcing your institution to make changes.
- Leaders need to speak to other leaders and passing on the message, sharing knowledge.