



Generic Policy Recommendations –  
National Stakeholders

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# Generic Policy Recommendations – National Stakeholders

## Introduction

All partner universities have now developed and implemented Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). While this process has been underway, SPEAR's methodology has ensured that our cumulative experiences with GEP development and organizational Gender Equality measures more broadly are translated into policy recommendations. This process has involved ongoing trainings by SDU as WP6 leader for all partners to aid the process of transforming our experiences into both generic and specific recommendations at both the organizational and national levels.

This Deliverable D6.4 outlines, together with D6.2 – D6.5 the first installment of the SPEAR consortium's policy recommendations. These four deliverables cover the organizational level (D6.2 and D6.3) and the national level (D6.4 and D6.5). The second further developed installment follows in Month 45. This first installment represents therefore initial thoughts that will be fleshed out in these final versions.

The recommendations list 'what' is presented, 'why' this area is important and 'how' to approach a policy change. Not all recommendations include the 'how' category, as the generic recommendations in this deliverable are conceived to draw attention to general areas of possible interventions for national stakeholders, such as politicians and national organizations. In the following recommendations, SPEAR's partners address national politicians, RFOs, e.g., the German Research Foundation and the Ministry of Culture and Science in the case of RWTH. If partners include the 'how', this is to be taken as possible mode of attack from a general perspective. At the same time, the deliverable containing specific recommendations for national stakeholders (the confidential D6.5) elaborates on possible venues for change, based on the knowledge SPEAR partners accumulate in our own organizations.

### **Key terms**

- Academic involvement in policy development
- Focus on gender-specific obstacles
- GE and gender studies funding
- Parental leave legislation
- Involvement of the political level in GEP design and implementation - Gender mainstreaming / Integration of gender perspective in HE - Promotional criteria
- Gender mainstreaming in national policies
- National audit and sanctions irt. GEP implementation
- Government initiatives to support GEP development in HE and RPOs
- Gender sensitivity in statistics
- Gender sensitivity in language
- GE in legal framework
- Address men in national GE policy
- Remove legislative obstacles to GE



- Promote GE knowledge
- National coordination of GE and EO work

### **Main categories**

*Government support for GE-initiatives.* Some partners call for more support from their governments, e.g., in terms of investing in the development of research projects and allocate funds for planned gender equality actions and initiatives to move towards a more gender-equal, non-discriminatory, and inclusive environment (NOVA). PU suggests that the government organizes initiatives supporting HE and RPOs in their efforts to develop institutional GEPs. In the same general area, UU calls for the coordination and exchange of knowledge and experience between the different national authorities that follow up how the higher education institutions work with GE and EO.

*GE principles integrated in national politics.* These recommendations are somewhat related to the points above, but with a clearer focus on national policy development. VU calls to have GE principles integrated in all national policies and to have a national audit of legally required implementation of GE and antidiscrimination policies in organizations and system of both positive and negative sanctions. SWU advocates for more gender sensitivity when collecting statistics and language sensitivity in the legal framework. RWTH warns that addressing the special burdens placed on women by family responsibilities may lead to a reinforcement of gender stereotypes – and therefore men must be mentioned more clearly in relation to their roles as fathers. UNIRI advocates for increased academic involvement in policy development. VMU warns that influential stakeholders (e.g., ministries, research councils, municipalities, other related institutions) often lack deep understanding of gender mainstreaming and fail to activate the right GE processes. SDU welcomes the recent Danish legislative alteration to earmark a total of eleven weeks parental leave for each parent. This helps relieve the stigmatization of women as a worse fit for promotions, etc.

## **1 University of Southern Denmark (SDU)**

*Key terms: parental leave legislation*

*Addressed to: Danish Universities, Ministry of Research and Higher Education*

### **What**

In addition to the recently implemented Danish legislative earmarking of a total of eleven weeks parental leave for each parent, we recommend that additional destigmatizing practices are implemented at Danish Universities that may equal out the gender skewed challenges facing mothers and fathers in Academia, such as a supplementary internal and automatic funding scheme to minimize local parental leave salary expenses as well as possibilities for catching up on research directly upon return.

### **Why**

Increasingly, early career academics with children end up leaving academia compared to their peers without children – and especially women with children are leaking from the pipeline<sup>1</sup>. The career

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<sup>1</sup> Damvad Analytics (2018): [Videnskabeligt personales karriereveje](#) [Academic employees' career paths]. Copenhagen: DAMVAD Analytics



path for parents, especially women, is also slowed down by having children, resulting in women with children earning on average DKK1,000 less than their peers every month<sup>2</sup>. Parental leave thus poses a number of stigmatizing and career adverse problems for parents, affecting both, although differently, men and women<sup>3</sup>. For women on maternity leave, catching up on developments in their fields of research upon returning to academic work takes time, especially if presented with a high teaching load. Also, problems with women being stigmatized as potential 'absentees' (due to parental leave), may keep them from opportunities in terms of hiring, salary increase, research collaborations, promotions, etc. This new legislative development aimed at a greater sharing of leave may help rectify some of these challenges.

### How

SDU's Gender Equality team supports the recent legislative change in Denmark to earmark a total of 11 weeks for each parent. We believe that this will have a beneficial effect on gender equality in academia. Additional destigmatizing practices are already in place at SDU and can easily be adopted at other universities:

- The state and municipal parental leave salary compensation together on average equal 75% of the actual salary expense of people on parental leave. At SDU these are supplemented by allocated internal funds in order to compensate departments and research centres/groups up to 100%. This is administered in a simple and automatic way by each year in the new budget matching 1:1 the state compensation for the previous year directly to the units wherefrom the salary is paid, no matter whether the salary is internally or externally funded.
- For every six months parental leave, it is possible to reserve three months of research time with no teaching duties, in order to allow long term leave-takers to catch up on their research<sup>4</sup>
- In recruitment and CV's only academic age which discounts care leave, is taken into account

## 2 Uppsala University (UU)

*Key terms: national coordination of GE and EO work*

*Addressed to: The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR), The Equality Ombudsman (DO) and The Swedish Gender Equality Agency (JäMy).*

### What

Continue to strengthen collaboration between strategic actors that are relevant to the higher education sector's GE and EO work, such as the following government agencies:

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) evaluates the quality of higher education and research, analyses the development, is responsible for official statistics about higher education and monitors compliance with laws and regulations among universities and university colleges.

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<sup>2</sup> The Danish Council for Research and Innovation Policy (2019): "[Karrierer i forskningen](#)" [Career in research]. Copenhagen: The Ministry of Higher Education and Science

<sup>3</sup> See e.g., LERU (2020): "[Family Leave for Researchers at LERU Universities](#)". Advice paper no. 28.

<sup>4</sup> <https://sdunet.dk/en/servicesider/hr/ansattelsesforhold/barsel>



The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) is a government agency tasked with providing support to the education sector through a number of various activities.

The Equality Ombudsman (DO) works to combat discrimination on grounds of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnic origin, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age. DO examines complaints concerning discrimination and harassment, and assesses how employers, HEIs and schools work to prevent discrimination.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency (JäMy) contributes to effective implementation of Swedish gender equality policy. The main task is to coordinate, follow up and provide various forms of support in the area of gender equality.

#### **Why**

To develop gender mainstreaming and learn from each other's work. There are clear points of contact, for example between JäMy's and UKÄ's work with gender mainstreaming of education and quality assurance of education. Synergy effects can in this way be utilized and strengthen the prioritization of gender equality work.

To meet the need for a comprehensive follow-up of the higher education sector's GE and EO work.

To coordinate monitoring and evaluation of GE and EO to facilitate for HEIs, where many important tasks are competing for individuals' and managers' attention.

### **3 Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule (RWTH)**

*Key terms: address men in national GE policy, remove legislative obstacles to GE, promote GE knowledge*

*Addressed to: the German Research Foundation, the Ministry of Culture and Science NRW, other Federal Ministries*

#### **What**

Addressing compatibility of work with family and care duties as a topic for men as well:

The so-called compatibility issue of care work and the performance requirements of the academic system has proven to be a central motive in explaining gender inequality at universities, along with the paradigm of "selection of the best". This topic is not new, and in addition to prominent certifications such as the "audit family-friendly university", the topic has also long been a focus of work in the area of gender equality at each of the evaluated universities (as well as at other universities), in more recent times increasingly with a focus on caring for dependents.

#### **Why**

In particular, care must be taken to ensure that addressing the special burdens placed on women by family responsibilities does not lead to a reinforcement of gender stereotypes. However, these gender stereotypes are also shaped outside the universities and are therefore unlikely to be



significantly influenced by university equality policies alone. In this respect, a central task of gender equality policy at the federal, state, and university level should be to expand the group of the caregivers to people of all genders.

#### How

- In gender equality policy-making at a national as well as university level, men should be addressed more strongly in their role as (potential) fathers and caregivers.
- Remove legal regulations that support the family breadwinner model.
- Promote gender and equality knowledge.
- Use the results of gender equality research for the further development of the higher education system.

## 4 South-West University (SWU)

*Key terms: GE in legal framework, gender sensitivity in language*

*Addressed to: Syndicates, Student Council*

#### What

Public institutions should be more gender sensitive - for example when collecting statistics or in administrative procedures.

To propose changes in legislation and government measures regarding the use of feminine words in the official language - in administrative procedures, in the media

#### Why

The lack of gender differentiation in the collection of certain types of statistics hinders the identification of certain problems and the right decisions to address them.

The use of only the masculine gender of the words means the presence of symbolic power - discrimination against women.

#### How

- Recommendations to national authorities - for example to the National Statistical Institute.
- Refer the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.
- To work with student organizations at the national level.

## 5 Plovdiv University (PU)

*Key terms: government initiatives to support GEP development in HE and RPOs*

*Addressed to: Ministry of Education and Science, National Contact Points for Horizon Europe*

#### What



This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020-SwafS 7 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 824544



In the design of the new EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe, having a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is an eligibility criterion for all public bodies, higher education institutions and research organisations from EU Member States wishing to participate in the Program<sup>5</sup>.

This requirement concerns all such organisations in Bulgaria, as a member state of the EU.

Bearing in mind that Bulgarian Higher Education and Research Organizations (HEI&RO) do not have enough knowledge and experience to develop GEPs of adequate quality and even less to ensure their implementation in practice, it is obvious the need for respective support from the government or the relevant responsible bodies and institutions at national level.

### Why

Gender equality in research and innovation is a priority in the policies related to the construction of the European Research Area (ERA) since its launch in 2000. Bulgaria, as a member of the EU, has made commitments to participate in the construction of the ERA and to provide adequate support to Bulgarian participants in the EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation. The implementation of these commitments is also envisaged as a policy set out in the new National Strategy for Development of Scientific Research in the Republic of Bulgaria, 2017 - 2030 (Better Science for Better Bulgaria), namely "Integration in the European Research Area and the International Scientific Community"<sup>6</sup>.

Although the information for introduction of the GEP eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe is well known to the Bulgarian government and all HEI&RO, so far in the country, there are no initiatives initiated by the government or other responsible bodies to help the HEI&RO in the development of GEPs. The only support they provide is to disseminate the information offered by the European Commission on this topic (via websites, guidelines, trainings, etc.). This can be clearly seen from the Bulgarian Portal for Participation in Horizon Europe, which is maintained by the Ministry of Education and Science<sup>7</sup>.

### How

The government or other responsible bodies in the country to include in its agenda the organization of initiatives supporting HEI&RO in their efforts to develop and implement institutional GEPs and thus to ensure real and sustainable change in the field. To this end, the model of other European countries can be followed, as for example Portugal<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/51704c8d-ca5f-11eb84ce-01aa75ed71a1>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mon.bg/bg/143>

<sup>7</sup> <https://horizoneu.mon.bg>

<sup>8</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries/portugal>



## 6 Vilnius University (VU)

*Key terms: gender mainstreaming in all national policies, national audit and sanctions. GEP implementation*

*Addressed to: National Stakeholders, such as the Research Council of Lithuania, the Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson.*

### What

Coherent proclamation of GE in R&I on national level.

### Why

There is lack of understanding of / sensitivity to differences of women and men's situations in different fields of science, in the organization and in the society in general. Prevailing approach is based on numbers (e.g., "women compose majority in humanities so there are no gender equality related issues"), biases (e.g., "having children will impede women's career"), gender stereotypes (e.g., "women are not suitable for STEM"). These approaches feed resistance to gender equality focused initiatives<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, despite legal requirement to have gender equality and antidiscrimination policy in the organizations having more than 50 employees<sup>10</sup> (thus, including national RPOs, RFOs and HEIs), the main tendency is to introduce equal opportunities policy where focus on gender equality issues disappears among other topics.

### How

National Stakeholders, such as the Research Council of Lithuania, the Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, would be advised to unite efforts striving to implementation of the EC GE requirements and to:

- Coherently integrate GE principles in all national R&I policies;
- Establish national audit of legally required implementation of GE and antidiscrimination policies in organizations and system of both positive and negative sanctions.

## 7 Vytautas Magnus University (VMU)

*Key terms: involvement of the political level in GEP design and implementation, gender mainstreaming, promotional criteria*

*Addressed to: Research Council of Lithuania, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, The Government Strategic Analysis Center (STRATA), the Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology, municipalities, etc.*

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<sup>9</sup> The information is based on personal experiences of VU SPEAR team members during discussions in VU departments and with other colleagues working with GE issues in other RFOs, RPOs, and HEIs.

<sup>10</sup> The Labour Code of Republic of Lithuania, art. 26

(<https://eseimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/3447732082b511e98a8298567570d639>)



### What

Important and influential stakeholders (ministries, research councils, municipalities, other related institutions) will be more active in the process of promoting gender equality in areas where they act if they engage in the process of design and implementation of gender equality plans and other active gender equality promotion actions.

### Why

Important and influential stakeholders (ministries, research councils, municipalities, other related institutions) often lack deep understanding of gender mainstreaming and fail to activate the processes of related to gender equality at national and institutional level. One of the important national stakeholders is Research Council of Lithuania that is responsible for research policies. At the governmental level, Ministry of Social Affairs is assigned the formal responsibility to coordinate gender equality in all areas<sup>11</sup>. At the municipal level, the importance of gender equality policy goals is recognized. However, research shows in most cases, gender equality policy is narrowed down to the legal principles of non-discrimination regulation.<sup>12</sup>

### How

To design and implement Gender Equality Plans as salient set of measures on promotion of gender equality on institutional and national level. This recommendation is addressed to such stakeholders as ministries, research councils, municipalities, etc. As example of mainstreaming gender equality in research funding organization could be Gender Equality Guidelines designed and approved in 2021 by Research Council of Lithuania<sup>13</sup>. This document highlights a need to seek for gender balance in research, to combat stereotypes, to promote systemic and cultural changes on organizational and broader societal level, to promote gender balance in the process of research funding. The Research Council of Lithuania actively disseminate information on EU gender equality policies and measures. In Lithuania, some gender equality initiatives have been implemented on municipality level in Lithuania by running EU projects<sup>14</sup>. Guidelines for mainstreaming gender equality at municipalities has been created<sup>15</sup>. Many municipalities designed and approved gender equality plans or gender equality policy documents.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/moteru-ir-vyru-lygybe/lyciu-lygybes-integracija-visose-srityse-lietuvojeir-institucinis-mechanizmas>

<sup>12</sup> Pilinkaitė Sotirovič, V. ir Kontvainė, V (2021). Lyčių lygybės politikos diskursai ir procesai savivaldoje: „gyvenimiškos būtinybės pas mus šiai dienai nėra“. VIEŠOJI POLITIKA IR ADMINISTRAVIMAS/ PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION 2021, T 20, Nr. 1/2021, Vol. 20, Nr. 1, p. 58-69.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.lmt.lt/lt/doclib/spa2szgspzvnvmjx5y652zn96pva8dg>

<sup>14</sup> <https://lygybe.lt/lt/savivaldybes-sekmes-kodas-lyciu-lygybe>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.lygybe.lt/data/public/uploads/2018/09/nuo-a-iki-z-lyciu-lygybes-vadovas-savivaldybems.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> *III Plano Nacional para a Igualdade – Cidadania e Género (2007-2010)*, in Portuguese only.



## 8 NOVA University Lisbon (UNL)

*Key terms: GE and gender studies funding, integration of gender perspective in HE*

*Addressed to: Portuguese Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education, the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, other stakeholders that can have groundwork in gender studies or gender-related issues.*

### What

We need to outline the importance of maintaining protocols that ensure sustained funding for research projects aimed to deepen the scientific knowledge on gender, social relations and policies for gender equality and integrate the gender perspective in higher education, mainly through promoting studies and specific criteria for integration, evaluation, accreditation, and extracurricular programmes.

### Why

Since the III National Plan for Equality – Citizenship and Gender (2007-2010)<sup>16</sup> that has been acknowledged the need for gender-sensitive budget to reinforce the gender dimension in public policies as a mean to promote gender equality. Since then, due to the fact that gender budgeting is a complex process and its implementation will have impact in multiple areas, from the labour market and taxation to the pension and health systems, gender budgeting is still a goal on the verge to be achieved. There is virtually no investment in gender-related subjects and although there is some statutory provisions concerning gender equality and equal opportunities, there is no legislation in force, in this regard. Intervention in gender related issues is prioritized through the constitutional principles of equality and non- discrimination and are fundamental tasks of the Government<sup>16</sup>. For the first time, national plan for equality address gender equality in HEI.

### How

To move towards a more gender equal, non-discriminatory, and inclusive environment, it is necessary to raise awareness, mostly among government bodies that play an important role in allocating the budget for HEI and RPO. One possibility could be the elaboration of a policy addressing the mandatory need to allocate a budget percentage, specific for GE/EO activities, every year. Moreover, it is also important to call the attention of these bodies that these type of directives from EC are gaining a bigger dimension and the HEI and RPO need to have resources and specific budget to implement such initiatives. These will allow to the HEI and RPO mobilisation and ensure the availability of human and financial resources and development of research projects and initiatives focused on Gender Equality/Gender Studies.

In addition, it would be relevant to encourage and foster, close to the national agency of accreditation for higher education courses, the inclusion of optional courses in the academic curricula focused on gender equality that are transversal to all scientific domains and HEI.

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<sup>16</sup> [\*Estratégia Nacional para a Igualdade e a Não Discriminação 2018-2030 \(ENIND\)\*](#), in Portuguese only.



## 9 University of Rijeka (UNIRI)

*Key terms: academic involvement in policy development, gender-specific obstacles*

*Addressed to: national government and public bodies (Gender Equality Ombudsperson, members of the Parliament)*

### What

Communicate academia-specific capacities and challenges to allow for gender-specific alignment with the needs of the entire community as well as individual members of the academia.

Involve representatives from academia in the development/implementation of national policies, strategies, and legislation in all areas of intervention (prevention, training of professionals, support, development of recommendations and legislative changes, etc.).

### Why

There are examples of national policies and actions that could take greater account of gender specific obstacles to equality. Academia is both the think-tank and one of the key stakeholders in the direct implementation and application of national policies/laws/measures.

### How

By establishing working relationship with the Gender Equality Ombudsperson in Croatia, as well as with certain political parties and EU parliamentarians, and by lobbying for appropriate legislative revisions, especially as Croatia is in the process of drafting a new law on scientific activity and higher education.

By nominating experts to relevant national bodies, working groups, etc. For example, since areas of intervention regarding sexual harassment prevention relate to the training of professionals working with victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment, and with regard to the possibility of introducing training programs on sexual violence in universities, UNIRI representatives have been nominated as members of working group drafting the National Anti-Harassment Plan 2022 - 2027.

The University uses the advocacy of individuals who hold certain positions or have been appointed to various national bodies to promote its values (e.g. Rectress Snježana PrijićSamaržija is Chair of the Croatian Board of Rectors in the academic year 2021/2022 and the president of the Young European Research Universities Network, YERUN and Sanja Barić, Rector's Assistant for Institutional Capacities and Policies, and a UNIRI SPEAR team member, is a member of the Committee on the Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System of the Croatian Parliament and a member of the Human Rights Council of the Croatian Ombudsperson).

In addition, UNIRI regularly participates in public consultations when legislation is being drafted (consultation with the interested public).

