

Action 5: Promote gender equality and foster inclusiveness, taking note of the Ljubljana Declaration

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1. Description

What does the action consist of? Explanation of the problems being addressed, the means used, the objectives to be achieved. Are certain actions already ongoing? Interplay with other actions or policies (EU or national).

Background/rationale:

The ERA framework set by the Communication of 17 July 2012 and follow-up Council Conclusions of 1 December 2015 on Advancing gender equality in the ERA had set *gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research* as an ERA priority, covering 3 specific objectives – gender equality in careers at all levels, gender balance in decision-making, and the integration of the gender dimension into research content – with institutional change through e.g. Gender Equality Plans encouraged as a core approach for addressing these objectives. This framework, supported by funding under Horizon 2020, has been a catalyser for action at institutional and national levels.

Yet, as the 2020 *A New ERA for Research and Innovation* Staff Working Document and the *She Figures 2021* report show, there are still persisting gender inequalities in the R&I system across Europe, a lack of integration of the gender dimension into R&I content, and a gap persists between the adoption of policies and strategies at EU and national level and their implementation at institutional level. There is a need to continue joint action, and to better address gender-based violence in academic settings, as well as open gender equality policies to inclusiveness and intersections with other diversity categories and potential grounds for discrimination such as ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

Horizon Europe has thus strengthened gender equality provisions, setting the requirement to have in place a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) as an eligibility criterion for all public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments from Member States and Associated Countries, and the integration of the gender dimension into R&I content as a requirement by default.

The Commission's Communication 'A new ERA for Research and Innovation' of 30 September 2020 introduces a new concept to deepen the ERA through gender equality which includes most notably the development of **inclusive gender equality plans with Member States and stakeholders, building on Horizon Europe**. This inclusiveness dimension aims to better tackle intersections between gender and other diversity categories (i.e. intersectionality), as well as to take into account inclusiveness at the geographical and sectorial levels to ensure that all countries are on board, and that the innovation and private sectors are also involved, considering in

	<p>particular the significant under-representation of women in the STEM-oriented innovative entrepreneurship domain.</p> <p>The Council Conclusions of 1 December 2020 on the New ERA also called on the Commission and Member States “<i>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</i>”.</p> <p>The Pact on R&I in Europe clearly affirms gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusiveness as well as the integration of gender dimension into R&I content, as a values and principles, and underlines as priorities for joint action: ensuring fair, open, inclusive and gender-equal career paths to facilitate systemic institutional and structural change in R&I funding and performing organisations; counteracting gender-based violence including sexual harassment; removing inequities regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; and monitoring and evaluating national gender equality policies and plans in R&I.</p> <p>The Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation (see detail below under 8. Additional Information), endorsed by a large majority of Member States and Associated Countries, further reinforces this joint commitment. It also highlights institutional change in R&I organisations through GEPs as one of the most significant policy instruments to achieve long-term, sustainable, advancement towards gender equality in R&I, and defines priority areas of common action to promote gender equality and inclusiveness in the new ERA.</p> <p><u>The 4, interlinked, outcome deliverables proposed for Action 5 of the ERA Policy Agenda reflect these key priorities:</u></p> <p>1. Develop a policy coordination mechanism to support all aspects of gender equality through inclusive Gender Equality Plans and policies, and a dedicated EU network on their implementation</p> <p>To address the policy development towards the novel inclusive gender equality plans and policies approach in the new ERA, sustained political coordination is necessary. For this, an adequate mechanism needs to be established. The creation under the ERA Forum of a sub-group on inclusive gender equality policies, with a well-defined and time-bound mandate, in complementarity with a support network funded under Horizon Europe, would enable the effective delivery of this outcome.</p> <p>Such a policy coordination mechanism would involve Member State and Commission representatives, with Associated Countries invited to join this dedicated sub-group, and increased cooperation with other ERA stakeholders, most notably umbrella organisations of academic and funding organisations. It would ensure policy dialogue, mutual learning, data analysis and exchange of good practices, and would support coordination on</p>
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	<p>all aspects needed to jointly advance on inclusive gender equality policy in R&I, and to deliver on the three other priority outcome Deliverables set out for this ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024. It would also allow exploring other key areas of common policy interest, such as women's access to leadership roles in R&I organisations and impact on R&I performance.</p> <p>2. Strategy to counteract gender-based violence including sexual harassment in the European R&I system and to assure gender equality in working environments through institutional change in any research funding or performing organisation</p> <p>Gender-based violence in higher education, research and innovation is a serious and under-recognised issue with severe negative impacts on study and career outcomes in research and higher education. A cohesive infrastructure and procedures for preventing and tackling gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in academia and in the full European R&I system, in the Member States and associated countries, are missing, as revealed a pilot study carried out by the ERAC SWG GRI on this topic in 2020. There is a prominent lack of relevant policies, legislation/regulations, responsible authorities, gender-based violence/sexual harassment experts, gender-sensitive protocols and reporting procedures and up-to-date prevalence data. Horizon Europe highlights gender-based violence including sexual harassment as one of the key thematic areas to be addressed in Gender Equality Plans. Building on undergoing initiatives, the new ERA needs to develop policy coordination and action in this field, also involving RFOs, RPOs and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure truly gender equal, safe and inclusive R&I working environments and international mobility conditions. A key objective would be to work towards the development of an EU baseline, such as an EU "zero tolerance code of conduct on gender based violence in R&I", which concrete implementation could be supported under the Horizon Europe 2023-2024 work programme.</p> <p>This outcome is very much in line with forthcoming Presidencies priorities, including the Czech Presidency's planned conference on gender-based violence in R&I in November 2022, which will build on first key outcomes of the Horizon 2020-SwafS funded project UniSAFE (<i>Gender-based violence and institutional responses: building a knowledge base and operational tools to make universities and research organisations safe</i>).</p> <p>3. A policy approach to strengthen gender equality, that addresses gender mainstreaming to advance the new ERA</p> <p>To achieve meaningful policy advancement at ERA level it is essential to develop a common concept and policy approach to inclusive gender equality, which will address gender mainstreaming and integrate an intersectional perspective</p>
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	<p>opening to different diversity dimensions, such as ethnicity, disability, age or sexual orientation.</p> <p>This policy approach should be based on systemic, structural, institutional change and cover three key levels: ensure fair, open, gender equal and inclusive career paths in research; ensure gender balance and increase diversity in decision-making; foster the integration of sex, gender and intersectional analysis into research and innovation content.</p> <p>It should build on the new EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which takes an intersectional approach, as well as on existing policies, strategies, measures and best practices on equality, diversity and inclusion policies, in R&I organisations at Member State and Associated Country level and at EU level. Support for achieving this outcome will be provided by the pilot procurement study on inclusive gender equality policies, launched under the 2020 Horizon 2020 work programme, followed up by the Centre of Excellence on inclusive gender equality in R&I to be funded under the 2021 Horizon Europe work programme and launched in Spring 2022, which will act as a think tank and provide expertise and support to Member States, R&I organisations, and the Commission, in the design, implementation and assessment – including through pan-European data collection – of institutional change through inclusive GEPs. Close collaboration of Member States to this work will be key.</p> <p>The policy approach for gender mainstreaming will also entail ensuring that gender equality is addressed in a crosscutting manner in all the 19 other ERA Policy Agenda actions.</p> <p>4. Develop principles for the integration and evaluation of the gender perspective in research and innovation content in cooperation with national Research Funding Organisations</p> <p>This outcome focuses more particularly on the key role of RFOs in advancing gender equality in the ERA, in line with the Council Conclusions on the new ERA of December 2020.</p> <p>Gender equality contributes to the integrity and societal responsibility of research, leveraging scientific and technological quality to higher standards, namely through the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content.</p> <p>Integrating sex (biological) and gender (socio-cultural) analysis into R&I content, with an intersectional perspective where relevant, adds value to R&I in terms of excellence, rigor, reproducibility as well as creativity, and contributes to the production of goods and services better suited to a diverse population, potentially opening new markets. It is crucial to securing Europe's leadership in science & technology and to support inclusive and sustainable growth.</p> <p>Research funding organisations (RFOs) are key players to foster such an integration in their programmes and evaluation processes. Building on existing initiatives – such as the Horizon</p>
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	<p>2020 SwafS-funded GENDER-NET Plus ERA-NET Cofund –, on pilot initiatives – such as the FORGEN (Funding Organisations for Gender) Community of Practice created through Horizon 2020 project ACT – and on WIDERA-funded actions – such as the Policy coordination project to be funded under the 2021 work programme and launched in Spring 2022, which will develop an extended Community of Practice of committed RFOs – as well as on Horizon Europe provisions, principles for an effective implementation and evaluation of the integration of the gender dimension in R&I contents and programmes will be defined for the new ERA.</p> <p>Beyond the sole integration of the gender dimension into R&I content, integrating a gender perspective in RFOs' programmes also entails advancing measures to help ensure that allocation of funding is not affected by gender biases in research and researchers assessment procedures, building in particular on the findings and recommendations from such projects as the Horizon 2020 funded GRANTeD (GRant Allocation Disparities from a gender perspective) project.</p> <p>Action 5 will interact closely with several other ERA Policy Agenda actions, including Action 3 on research assessment, Action 4 on research careers, Action 13 on universities. The Commission Communication on a European Strategy for Universities (ES4U) of 18 January 2022 indeed includes as priority action the implementation of inclusive GEPs in higher education institutions. Action 5 has overall synergies with objectives set for gender equality and inclusiveness within the European Education Area, the European Innovation Agenda, as well as the Cohesion funds.</p>
<p>2. Actors</p>	<p><i>Who should implement the action? Member States, Commission, Associated Countries, other 3rd countries, stakeholders, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Please note whether half of Member States are already expected to be involved (para. 10 of Council conclusions)</i></p> <p>The effective implementation of Action 5 will require the involvement of Member States, the Commission, Associated Countries and third countries, as well as stakeholder umbrella organisations (of academic institutions, e.g. EUA, LERU, as well as European University Alliances; and of national RFOs e.g. Science Europe).</p> <p>A priori, over half of Member States are expected to want to be involved in Action 5, as 25 out of 27 Member States have endorsed the Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in R&I on which Action 5 builds, and through which these 25 Member States have “committed to achieving [its] goals, leveraging the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the Gender Action Plan III” and to “[working] together with stakeholders in setting ambitious targets and goals to support the advancement of gender equality in the new European Research Area”.</p> <p>The high level of Member State and Associated Country</p>

	<p>representation, and active participation, in the former ERAC SWG GRI is also an indicator of the level of interest for Action 5.</p>
<p>3. Timing and milestones</p>	<p><i>As far as a calendar can be established already at this stage.</i></p> <p>Closely linked outcomes 1 (policy coordination mechanism) and 3 (policy approach) should be dealt with together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q2 2022: create a dedicated subgroup in the ERA Forum and start policy dialogue • Q2 2022: Final delivery of the pilot procurement study on inclusive gender equality policies, launched under the 2020 Horizon 2020 work programme • Q2 2022: launch of the Centre of Excellence on inclusive gender equality policy in R&I project under Horizon Europe HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-80. • Q2 2022: launch of the policy coordination support project under Horizon Europe HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81. • Q4 2024: for effective coordination and implementation on all of the above deliverables, including collaboration with related Horizon funded projects and initiatives, the dedicated subgroup should be active throughout the whole period, until 2024. <p>Outcome 2 (gender-based violence):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3 2022: mapping of existing institutional policies and prevalence in European research organisations and universities, carried out by project UniSAFE • Q4 2022: Czech Presidency conference on gender-based violence in R&I, building on first recommendations by UniSAFE, on 24-25 November 2022; • Q1-Q2 2023: strategic engagement (e.g. zero-tolerance code of conduct) • Q4 2023: implementation of the strategic engagement supported through a foreseen 2023 WIDERA topic, building on final outputs of project UniSAFE. <p>Outcome 4 (gender perspective in RFOs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q2 2022: launch of the policy coordination support project under Horizon Europe HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81 which should establish a transnational Community of Practice of R&I funding organisations for the promotion of a gender-inclusive culture change in R&I institutions across Europe, linked through a Memorandum of Understanding.
<p>4. Funding</p>	<p><i>Identification of different sources of funding (EU, national, private, etc.) and if possible projected amounts.</i></p> <p>Action 5 builds on the commitment of both Commission and Member States (as well as associated and non-associated third countries) to the Ljubljana Declaration and to the gender equality and inclusiveness principles enshrined in the Pact for R&I in Europe. Implementing</p>

	<p>Action 5 will require funding efforts by the EU and at national level.</p> <p>Regarding EU funding:</p> <p>-Still under the Horizon 2020 Science with and for Society work programme, many projects have started exploring inclusive/intersectional GEPs and policy aspects, and several procurement actions under the 2020 work programme have recently been launched that will support Action 5, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A pilot facility to support R&I organisations in developing GEPs through detailed guidance, mutual learning workshops involving the European University Alliances, and targeted trainings in Member States and Associated Countries, which will continue delivering in 2022 (budget EUR 300 000)- A pilot study on existing national and institutional inclusive, intersectional gender equality and diversity policies in R&I was launched in September 2021 and should deliver its final results in Spring of 2022 (budget EUR 60 000)- An evaluation study on the impact that EU and national policies and programmes on GEPs have had on gender equality in R&I across the ERA, and beyond this, on R&I quality and efficiency. This impact evaluation study, due to be concluded end of 2022, will also make recommendations for a relevant monitoring framework to measure progress on gender equality in the ERA, and thus contribute to the ERA scoreboard and related dashboard (budget EUR 380 000). <p>-Horizon Europe, chiefly through the WIDERA work programme, will offer support to the implementation of Action 5. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The 2021-2022 Work Programme contains several call topics that will provide direct support for Action 5, including, e.g:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81: Policy coordination to advance the implementation of the ERA gender equality and inclusiveness objectives within Member States, which includes a focus on RFOs' commitment on e.g. gender-based violence, and a focus on the integration of the gender dimension in R&I content with an opening to intersectionality (budget EUR 3 million)o topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-80: Centre of excellence on inclusive gender equality in R&I, which will provide expertise and support to Member States, R&I organisations and Commission, in the design, implementation and assessment of institutional change through inclusive gender equality plans (budget EUR 5 million)o topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-81: Support to the implementation of inclusive GEPs through a twinning-like peer-mentoring scheme (budget EUR 3 million)o topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-06-01: Support for R&I policy making in the Western Balkans" which specifies that activities will "support an institutional change through the development of inclusive gender equality plans in line with Horizon Europe and the ERA objectives".
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 2023-2024 Work Programme under preparation, will offer additional support for addressing key aspects of inclusive gender equality plans and policies, in particular for policy coordination on preventing gender-based violence in R&I organisations, and enhancing RFO partnership. <p>Additional funding will be provided through synergies with actions supporting the ERA Talent Platform, the European framework for research careers and European University Alliances, the European Excellence initiative acceleration services supporting institutional reform in universities, as well as actions supporting the reforms of research assessment in the ERA.</p>
<p>5. Expected impact</p>	<p><i>It is important to attempt to identify the expected impacts of the action, even if at an early stage there may be many unknowns.</i></p> <p>Action 5's outcome package will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the European R&I policy and funding system, at EU, national and institutional levels, by enabling the full participation of women and under-represented groups, and allowing all researchers to reach their full potential, in careers and decision-making, and in gender-equal and inclusive working environments that counteract gender-based violence - Enhance the excellence and societal relevance of European R&I by ensuring that research outputs are of the highest quality, rigorous and reproducible, and that emerging technologies and innovations are gender-responsive and benefit European citizens in all their diversity - Ensure that the R&I challenges of the digital and green twin transition and COVID-19 recovery are addressed in a gender equal and inclusive manner - Strengthen and deepen the ERA.
<p>6. Monitoring</p>	<p><i>Qualitative and quantitative elements that allow progress in the implementation to be monitored. Once the policy platform is operational, Member States and Commission will be able to use it for this purpose.</i></p> <p>The new ERA monitoring system consisting of an ERA scoreboard at EU level and an ERA dashboard at national level, as well as a policy platform, will fully embed indicators and a monitoring process for progress on Action 5.</p> <p>Preliminary suggestions for relevant indicators for gender equality have been proposed in the final report from the Horizon 2020 funded study on "Data gathering and analysis of policy developments and reforms: Study to evaluate the ERA policy framework/ERA monitoring mechanism". Additional recommendations for suitable indicators will stem from the recently launched H2020-funded evaluation study on the impact that EU and national policies and programmes on GEPs have had on gender equality in R&I across the ERA, and the policy coordination support project under topic HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ERA-01-81 will also support the monitoring of inclusive gender</p>

	<p>equality actions at the Member State level. Furthermore a monitoring of gender equality objectives and compliance with the GEP eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe will be carried out at Commission level.</p> <p>A collaboration with the JRC on the development of the ERA monitoring framework for inclusive gender equality is also envisaged building on their experience in devising the online monitoring tool for the Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.</p>
<p>7. Communication</p>	<p><i>What communication actions could be useful to promote the action, and who should do so (Commission, national public authorities, stakeholders, etc.)?</i></p> <p>Key events organised around Action 5 objectives under forthcoming Presidencies will help advance this Action, such as the CZ presidency Conference on 25-26/11/2022 on gender based violence in R&I.</p> <p>The 2022 Year of Youth and foreseen activities by the Commission to promote girls and women in Science, technology, engineering and mathematics will also provide opportunities to promote ERA Action 5.</p> <p>The role of a potential ERA Forum subgroup on inclusive gender equality would be crucial to communicate and mobilise national constituencies as well as stakeholders, including umbrella organisations.</p> <p>Communication actions, through, e.g. Commission websites and social media, conferences and social media of undergoing Horizon 2020 SwafS-funded gender equality projects and future WIDERA funded projects will further promote Action 5.</p>
<p>8. Additional information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation"</i> : Ljubljana-Declaration-on-Gender-Equality-in-Research-and-Innovation- endorsed final.pdf (gov.si) <p>The <i>Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation</i> was co-drafted by the two Presidency Trios (DE, PT, SI and FR, CZ, SE) and presented by the Slovenian Presidency to Member States in the Competitiveness Council of 28 September 2021</p> <p>The Declaration reiterates the importance of a joint commitment towards gender equality objectives in the new ERA, including gender equality in research careers, gender balance in decision-making, and the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content. It recognises gender equality as a driver for optimal and sustainable R&I systems, and calls for ensuring that gender equality and inclusiveness are central to the Pact for R&I in Europe, and across its links with complementary European initiatives such as the higher education agenda, innovation ecosystems, international cooperation and Cohesion policy funds.</p> <p>The priority areas put forward by the Declaration are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure fair, open, inclusive and gender equal career paths in research, and consider intersectional perspectives on gender inequalities;

TEMPLATE FOR EXPLANATORY DOCUMENTS ON ERA ACTIONS FROM THE ERA POLICY AGENDA

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Facilitate mutual learning opportunities through form-follows-function robust governance;– Employ existing and newly developed tools, such as Gender Equality Plans, to facilitate systemic institutional change and remove institutional barriers;– Address and counteract gender-based violence;– Support active monitoring and evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;– Leverage synergies to enhance gender equality achievements within the European Research Area, but also within complementary fields such as the European Higher Education Area, Cohesion policy funds, innovation ecosystems, as well as in international cooperation.– Underpinning the above priorities and activities, fully acknowledge gender mainstreaming as a horizontal principle. <p>As of the Competitiveness Council of 26 November 2021, the Ljubljana Declaration was endorsed by: 25 of the 27 Member States; 11 other countries including 10 Associated Countries or candidates to association to Horizon Europe (Armenia, Georgia, Iceland, Norway, and all 6 Western Balkans) plus Switzerland; and the European Commission. Three additional countries while not officially endorsing it, expressed explicit support for it (UK, Turkey, Australia).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>She Figures 2021</i>: Full Report; Interactive website including country fiches for every Member State; Policy briefs• EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025• Gender Action Plan III for External Action
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