



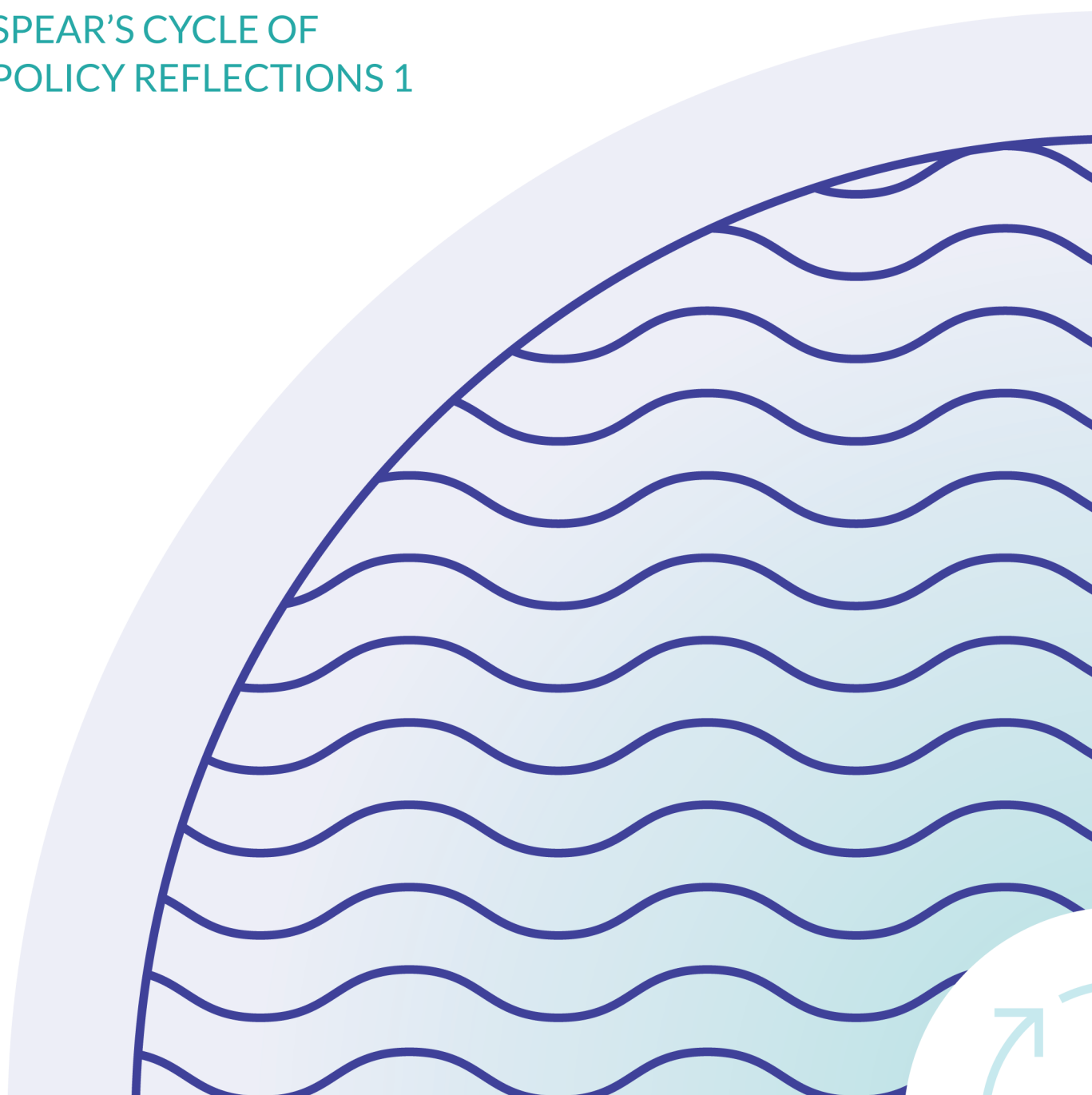
SPEAR

Supporting and Implementing Plans
for Gender Equality in Academia and Research

CAREERS IN ACADEMIA

Recruitment, promotion, career development

SPEAR'S CYCLE OF
POLICY REFLECTIONS 1



CAREERS IN ACADEMIA: RECRUITMENT, PROMOTION, CAREER DEVELOPMENT

WHAT

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

WHY

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

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

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

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

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

HOW

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

01

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

02

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

03

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

04

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

05

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

06

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

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

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

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

Empowering (e)quality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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