



SPEAR'S CYCLE OF
POLICY REFLECTIONS 3

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND GENDER EQUALITY PLANS



SPEAR

*Supporting and Implementing Plans
for Gender Equality in Academia and Research*

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

WHAT

Inclusive gender equality (GE+) is vital for higher education and other research organisations if we are to meet current and future challenges in comprehensive, competitive, fair, responsible and ethical ways. But GE+ does not happen without clear and operable requirements and objectives.

The European Union (EU) is a standard-bearer in setting such objectives: the visionary 2020–2025 Gender Equality (GE) strategy, the Gender Equality Priority in the European Research Area (ERA), the definition of gender equality as a core democratic value and the Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan (GEP) requirement all contribute to providing the framework and incentive for structures, approaches and instruments towards inclusive gender equality in European Academia.

WHY

Working for and promoting GE+ in the face of obstacles, anti-democratic resistance, power structures, biases and inequality regimes is an ambitious undertaking. Backsliding and reversal of positive developments are widespread. Therefore, GE work needs firm anchors. GE processes, GE mainstreaming and GEPs are indispensable as models for actions and measures, mainstreaming, monitoring and quality assurance of GE+ efforts.

For such anchors to be effective, policies, frameworks, measures and initiatives must be holistic, sustainable, context specific, research-based and multifaceted. Long-lasting initiatives must target institutional structures and cultural practices simultaneously. This includes revising processes and outcomes in administrative procedures and practices (i.e., gender mainstreaming), such as management, Human Resources (HR), finances and legal. For Academia, also research, innovation and teaching must undergo gender mainstreaming. Thorough involvement of stakeholders in developing and disseminating equality-promoting measures and practices is required – also to minimise resistance.

Clear objectives and requirements at supranational level are essential for individual institutions to refer to, as well as collect high-quality data and monitor progress against. Because of the complexity of integrating GE+ with prevailing values, strategies and daily practices, it is necessary that gender mainstreaming takes specific contexts and framework conditions into account. This requires GE+ expert resources to drive, analyse and adjust measures to bring about impact – which in turn requires qualified support and resources for GE+ agents.

For practitioners on the ground, it is vital that the drive for improvements and continuous clarification of what constitutes adequate and effective GE+ measures is kept up. Therefore, SPEAR calls for sharpening Horizon Europe's GEP requirement.

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 **the Sub-Group to the ERA Forum on ERA Action 5 of the ERA Policy Agenda 2022–2024, Inclusive Gender Equality in the ERA and Science Europa**, to strengthen the sector's concerted efforts for an inclusive and equal European Academia, here through focusing on GE processes, gender mainstreaming and GEPs.

01

Ensure critical infrastructure at EU level by embedding essential functions, bodies and resources that may provide continuity in the provision and coordination of state-of-the-art knowledge, resources and support as well as promote success stories and facilitate networks and communities of practice, such as the Centre of Excellence for Inclusive Gender Equality INSPIRE and the ERA 5 Sub-Group.

02

Promote collaboration and coordination between institutions and initiatives that advocate for GE+, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, ethics, responsible research, sustainability, etc. This will benefit from collaboration and coordination with institutions that provide data and statistics at international and national levels to facilitate gender mainstreaming, coordination and maximal impact in the provision of data and other resources. **This will also contribute to necessary and resilient advocacy and a concerted capacity to foster and provide research-based knowledge and qualified input to the political debate.**

03

Develop the GEP requirements further by upgrading the current five recommended content areas in two ways:

- a. supplementing with two additional content categories: *Gender Budgeting* and *GE+ Competencies for Management*, and
- b. making it a requirement that at least three of these categories are addressed explicitly in institutional GEPs.

04

Implement GE(P) audits and monitoring mechanisms capable of identifying GE measures and GEPs that bring about deep structural change in contrast to pro-forma documents with limited structural impact. These mechanisms could in turn benefit from being independently monitored and evaluated to balance and compare such activities across framework conditions and contexts.

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

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