



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on advancing gender equality in the European Research Area

Delegations will find attached draft Council conclusions on Advancing gender equality in the European Research Area with a view to the discussion by the Research Working Party at its meeting on 12 October 2015.

**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE
EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- Its Conclusions of 18 April 2005 on reinforcing human resources in science and technology in the European Research Area¹ (ERA), which invited Member States to formulate targets for the participation of women in particular by increasing significantly the number of women in leading positions, with the aim of reaching initially the goal of 25% in the public sector, as well as boosting their participation in industrial research and technology;
- Its Conclusions of 30 May 2008 on Family-Friendly Scientific Careers - towards an Integrated Model², which invited the Commission and Member States to develop an integrated model of scientific careers based on an appropriate policy mix ensuring a family-friendly environment for researchers;
- Its Conclusions of 11 December 2012³, setting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research as one of the key priorities for the European Research Area, and considering that improving the integration of a gender dimension into the design, evaluation and implementation of research needs to be improved to effectively foster research and innovation (R&I) excellence;

¹ Doc. 8194/05.

² Doc. 10212/08.

³ Doc. 17649/12.

- Its Conclusions of 21 February 2014 on the progress report from the Commission on European Research Area (ERA) 2013⁴, which considered that stepping up the efforts to systematically mainstream gender equality and the gender dimension in R&I policies and programmes should be taken into account in developing the ERA roadmap at the European level;
 - Its Conclusions of 5 December 2014 on the European Research Area Progress Report 2014⁵, noting the persistence of gender bias in careers, gender imbalance in decision-making roles, and the lack of a gender dimension in most of the national research programmes, and inviting Member States to support gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities;
 - Its Conclusions of 29 May 2015 on the European Research Area Roadmap 2015-2020 in which it endorsed translating national equality legislation into effective action to address gender imbalances in research institutions and decision making bodies, and integrating the gender dimension better into R&I policies, programmes and projects as one of the top action priorities identified in the ERA Roadmap and called on the Member States and the Commission to start its implementation through appropriate actions in their action plans or strategies by mid-2016;
1. **UNDERLINES** that gender inequalities have been persisting for too long and that future prosperity of Europe depends on scientific and technological innovation. Providing a more equal playing field for women and men as well as reducing gender-based inequalities in research will allow Europe to fully exploit its pool of labour force and talent;
 2. **ACKNOWLEDGES** that gender equality in science will contribute to excellence and quality in outcomes and make research more responsive to social and societal challenges that are a shared responsibility between women and men. Moreover, ensuring gender equality is not only a matter of fairness, but it is also an issue of economic efficiency. Embracing gender equality will strengthen EU competitiveness and contribute to growth and job creation;

⁴ Doc. 6945/14.

⁵ Doc. 16599/14.

THE ERA ROADMAP AS A FRAMEWORK

3. REAFFIRMS its commitment to enhance gender equality in the European Research Area. RECOGNISES that the implementation of the ERA Roadmap and the priority on gender equality offers an excellent opportunity to translate national equality legislation into effective action to address gender imbalances in research institutions and decision making bodies and integrating the gender dimension better into R&D policies, programmes and projects. INVITES Member States to set ambitious goals on gender equality and to take concrete actions in their national action plans or strategies by mid-2016;

SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

4. RECOGNISES the need to foster sustainable cultural and institutional changes in the ERA national action plans or strategies for achieving gender equality and ENCOURAGES Member States to take this into account in their national legal framework;
5. INVITES Member States and research funding organisations to provide incentives to encourage research performing organisations, as well as universities to develop gender equality plans and mobilise adequate resources to ensure their implementation, including financial support;
6. CONSIDERS that transparency must apply to recruitment and career progression at all levels as well as in fellowship and scholarship awarding procedures in R&I;
7. INVITES research organisations to support flexible working conditions and arrangements in R&I, and to review the assessment of researchers' performance in order to eliminate gender bias;
8. ENCOURAGES Members States in collaboration with the Commission to advance appropriate gender awareness rising and capacity building tools for institutional change;

9. INVITES the Commission to strengthen the implementation of gender equality objectives in Horizon 2020, at all possible stages, ranging from the preparation of work programmes to the evaluation and monitoring of research projects as well as in advisory and decision-making bodies;

GENDER BALANCE IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

10. NOTES that women continue to be underrepresented in top academic decision making positions, both as members of scientific and administrative boards and as heads of higher education institutions⁶;
11. STRESSES the need to strive for better gender balance in leadership and decision making positions by appropriate measures. INVITES Member States to set up quantitative targets for better gender balance in decision making bodies including leading scientific and administrative boards, recruitment and promotion committees as well as evaluation panels to be reached by 2020;
12. CALLS on the Commission to provide guidance for Member States to address policy challenges related to gender balance, including help to develop a common approach to facilitate the implementation of targets;

GENDER KNOWLEDGE AND MONITORING

13. INVITES Member States in collaboration with the Commission to make full use of mutual learning exercises, including within the framework of ERAC, and the exchange of good practices in the field of gender equality;
14. CALLS on Member States to ensure regular collection of sex-disaggregated data in the field of R&I;
15. INVITES Member States in cooperation with the Commission to monitor the implementation of gender policies, objectives and actions at institutional, national and EU level and RECOGNISES that the assessment of the outcomes and impacts of the implemented measures is crucial for improvement.

⁶ Preliminary data for the upcoming 'She Figures 2015' publication.