

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment
Task 4.3 The diversity challenge
D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups



Work Package 4 « Researcher's environment » -
Task 4.3 « The diversity challenge »

Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

EURAXESS TOPIII

Making European research careers more attractive by developing new services and enhancing the current services of the EURAXESS network

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Author(s): Brigitte Ernst, with the contributions of Svetlana Dimitrova, Janka Kottulova and Natalia Paganelli

Organisation: University of Liège (Belgium) partner 17, task leader

The document was written in the framework of the EURAXESS TOPIII project (Gr. No: 665934), funded by the EC under the Horizon 2020 programme.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment
Task 4.3 The diversity challenge
D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Table of contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Q1. Knowledge of the Charter and Code	7
Q2. Data collection about gender and diversity.....	7
Q3. Relation between gender and diversity: the concept of intersectionality.....	8
Q4. Status of researchers in the last 10 years	9
Q5. Influence of stereotypes on careers (men/women's roles and values).....	9
Q6. Work-private life balance	10
Q7. Measures addressing discrimination	11
Q8. Success factors in a researcher's career	12
Q9. Recruitment and promotion	13
Q10. Implementation of a mentoring programme.....	14
Q11. Mobility for women researchers	15
Q12. "Feminine" management leadership style	15
Conclusions	16
Annexes.....	18
Annex 1: Reports from the four focus groups	19
Annex 2: Focus group methodology	38

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Executive Summary

This report was drafted within the activities of the TOP III Work Package 4 which aims to enhance the capacity of EURAXESS network members to actively contribute to the development of **attractive research environment supportive to mobility and welcoming to the diversity**. One of the objectives of this work package is to broaden the portfolio of tools and measures developing and extending the expertise of the EURAXESS network and its members in the area of diversity management. Gender, in particular, was to be addressed as one dimension of diversity and mainstreaming gender into the EURAXESS services was encouraged.

In order to find out more about how EURAXESS Centres in different European regions currently reflect on the integration of gender equality and diversity principles into their mission, but also to raise awareness about the issue among them, four regional focus groups have been organised and their outcomes compared. The focus groups took place in:

- Liège, Belgium in March 2016;
- Bratislava, Slovakia in May 2016;
- Targoviste, Romania in July 2016;
- Rome, Italy in January 2017.

This report is an attempt to synthesise the findings of the four focus groups. Its structure reflects the pre-defined set of questions, although not all questions were addressed by all focus groups.

The following conclusion can be drawn from the four focus groups:

1. Insufficient awareness of the issue is being stressed unanimously, even among women themselves thus data collection and analysis thereof is needed.
2. Addressing gender issues is beneficial for both men and women researchers, as well as for the quality of research.
3. Lack of parenthood-friendly policies is considered by many participants as the main challenge to address, beyond gender discrimination.
4. Flexibility in maternity/parental leave is crucial for researchers.
5. Parental leave provisions could be better harmonised across Europe.
6. More options to work from home, with focus on results rather than control would be welcome.
7. More services should be provided to mobile families (and specifically to returning mother/parent researchers after a parental leave).
8. Providing training for women researchers, PhD students, mentors and supervisors will help change the culture of the organisation in a softer way than rules and quotas. They should anyway complement these.
9. Measures should always be adapted to the local context. The situation of women researchers can

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

vary dramatically across countries.

10. Assessment criteria for excellence in research and promotion should be reviewed.
11. Three conditions have been identified as essential for a successful career of a woman researcher: a well-prepared woman, a supportive (professional as well as family) environment, and positive institutional culture. Therefore, three types of actions are also needed: actions focused on the woman researcher, actions focused on the social environment (towards a gender-sensitive culture), and actions focused on the institutions (structural and procedural changes).

EURAXESS network can be an important leverage for institutional change within the EURAXESS Network members and beyond and can help to address above mentioned challenges in different ways. Especially three domains of EURAXESS activities could have a crucial role in this regard:

- EURAXESS Services for mobile researchers: EURAXESS members should make sure that these services are gender-sensitive and responsive to the needs of researchers with family responsibilities;
- EURAXESS Career Development Centres: activities targeting gender equality such as e. g mentoring or leadership training for young female researchers could be incorporated in newly developed career support services;
- Promotion of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers & European Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers (C&C): EURAXESS members can encourage institutions to address gender equality throughout the whole process of the implementation of Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS₄R).

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Introduction

This report summarises the outcomes of the four focus groups that were organised within the activities of Work Package 4 of the EURAXESS TOP III project. The aim of this work package is to enhance the capacity of EURAXESS network members to actively contribute to the development **of attractive research environment supportive to mobility and welcoming to the diversity**. The way how the diversity and mobility obstacles are handled depends on the ability of research institutions to perceive benefits that the mobility and diversity can bring and their readiness to introduce the measures supporting them. One of the aims of the WP₄ is therefore to prepare the EURAXESS network and its staff to overtake the role of **"agents of change"** within their institutions and proactively encourage adoption and implementation of strategies and tools necessary to create the environment supportive to mobility and welcoming to diversity. It should contribute to the extending of the knowledge on the diversity and mobility obstacles among the EURAXESS network through broadening a portfolio of tools and measures developing and extending the expertise of the EURAXESS network and its members in this area.

Gender, in particular, is addressed as one dimension of diversity. In order to find out more about how EURAXESS Centres in different European regions reflect on the integration of gender equality and diversity principles into their mission, but also to raise awareness about the issue among them, four regional focus groups have been organised and their outcomes compared. This report is an attempt to synthesise the findings of the four focus groups. Its structure reflects the pre-defined set of questions, although not all questions were addressed by all focus groups.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Summary of focus group outcomes

Discussions within the focus groups addressed broad spectrum of topics. Thirteen key questions were therefore identified to structure the outcomes.

Q1. Knowledge of the Charter and Code

The question was asked only in one focus group.

The situation was heterogeneous. Most of the universities knew about the Charter and Code and had adopted an implementation action plan including gender issues. Some universities had no gender policy, some others had a well-established gender policy, but it was not integrated into the perspective of the Charter and Code.

Q2. Data collection about gender and diversity

Participants noted that the issues are similar throughout Europe and that the gap is persisting, even when gender issues were taken into account through legal measures or gender action plans.

Women are broadly represented in higher education and research but mostly not in the top management (vertical segmentation).

Horizontal segmentation between 'male' tracks¹ of studies and research (sciences and technology) and 'female' ones (human and social sciences) persists.

One focus group highlighted a decrease of support for the gender issue from the stakeholders and the official representatives since the end of the communist era². In Eastern countries, there are more women in research than in the West, but not at the top positions.

Another focus group stressed that the sharing of problems opens the way to common solutions and that discussing their failures and successes and building a network was highly beneficial for the action in their institution³.

What is measured by data collection?

- Quantitative data: reflect representativeness
- Qualitative data:
 - Discrimination (objective and subjective dimensions)
 - Job satisfaction, working climate
 - Stereotypes and prejudices
 - A degree of support to a diversity management policy

¹ See minutes of the focus group Bratislava

² Idem

³ See minutes of the focus group Liège

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Because of the sensitivity of data collection, people often have to use self-declaration (for instance, about the feeling of discrimination, or belonging to the transgender group) because not everyone wants to disclose these data.

« *Without data, for us, it is impossible to take action.* » If these data are not collected, or not made public, the issue remains invisible, and no change can be requested.

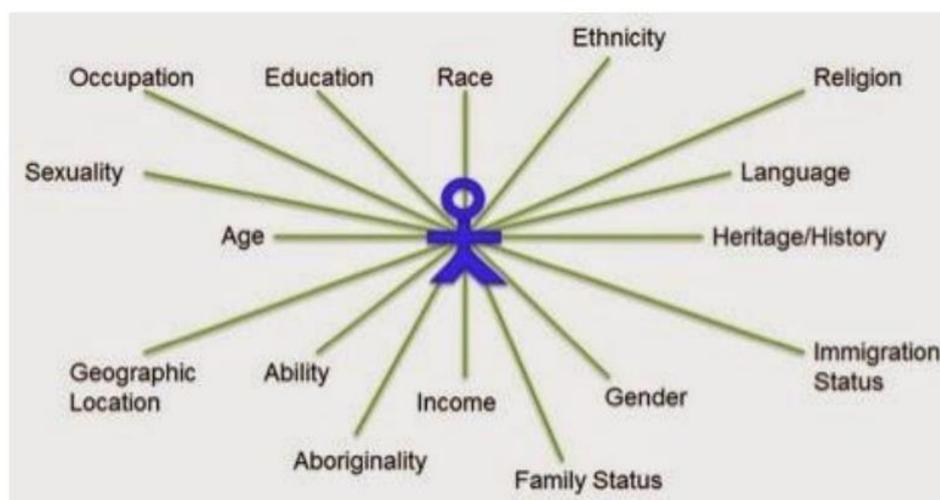
It is important to select indicators in line with the policy to be implemented. The data must be collected and analysed. All focus groups stressed the low level of awareness about the issue among their institutions.

Q3. Relation between gender and diversity: the concept of intersectionality

What is the place of diversity in the gender-related discussions? Can its inclusion bring a risk of undermining efforts in favour of gender, although these goals are not reached yet? Some think including diversity makes the gender issue even more invisible⁴, others argue it is a way to engage both men and women in the conversation⁵. Some also advocate that the gender sensitivity paves the way for the sensitivity to other types of discriminations.

Intersectionality⁶ may provide an answer: it allows to disaggregate - at the organisational level - the seemingly homogenous group of "women in science" by intersections and functions (age, nationality/ethnicity, citizenship status etc.).

Picture 1 Intersectional thinking⁷



⁴ See minutes of the focus group Bratislava

⁵ See minutes of the focus group Targoviste

⁶ See Garcia project working paper 6, 'Toolkit for integrating Gender', page 23: garciaproject.eu/wp-content/.../GARCIA_working_paper_6.pdf

⁷ Picture taken from the power point presentation of University of Gent "Gender aan de UGent "

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Q4. Status of researchers in the last 10 years

Parenthood was identified by all four focus groups as one of the issues strongly influencing the perceived status of a researcher (see further, question 6).

In one focus group, it was noted that increasingly, the *«individual researchers (men and women) have to cater for themselves in a complex bureaucratic system of work and organizational culture, as much operating in an informal and negotiating way»*.⁸

It was also noticed that women researchers frequently express ambivalent positions (*I like my job, but ...*). We can distinguish more "engaged" and "optimistic" male profiles, and more "ambivalent, realistic" female profiles.

The position of researchers (male and female) is fragilized and impacted by competitive and non-transparent selections, short-term contracts, scarcity of promotion opportunities and lack of administrative and technical assistance. It is within this general pessimistic context that the discrimination of female researchers takes place.

Q5. Influence of stereotypes on careers (men/women's roles and values)

Participants perceive gender stereotypes as being still very strong. Many of them noted that the gender issue is not a priority in their institutions. This issue usually does not get active support from their authorities. Some participants, however, told that they did not perceive the discrimination. One can observe a general lack of awareness of the issue⁹.

The division of roles is still vivid, in private as well as in a professional sphere. This observation is unanimous, but not all focus groups suggest the same solutions: "family support for both parents, support after a career break (e.g. maternity leave), more flexibility¹⁰ and the possibility to work from home¹¹ are some of them. Some interlocutors see the parental leave as a barrier to a successful career.¹²

Science and family are two "greedy institutions"¹³, but engagement in science is valorised, engagement in care functions is concealed. The two spheres are interlinked, although it is not acknowledged. Family challenges are considered being individual, not societal ones, and little is put in place to help face them in a collective way.

⁸See here above note 5

⁹ See minutes of the focus group Targoviste

¹⁰ See minutes of the focus group Rome

¹¹ See minutes of the focus groups Rome and Targoviste

¹² See minutes of the focus group Targoviste

¹³ A social institution that demands total commitment from its members and overrides the established separation of social life into different spheres, such as work, home, leisure, politics, and religion., see <http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095905791>

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

The involvement of a parent in research work is often made possible thanks to the presence of another figure in the background. Invisible, but nonetheless essential: the figure of the carer, who is obliged to devote time on a daily basis for the activities of care, household and other activities linked to private life.¹⁴ Reversely, some prominent women researchers were single or had no kids. In some cases, the male partner is the invisible carer.

One focus group stressed that the challenge is parenthood more than gender: in this regard, both parents should be offered assistance (parental leaves). These leaves should be very flexible because research cannot cope with the long absence¹⁵. Whatever the legislation, a carer (still more often a woman researcher) is very often requested to perform research activities even during their maternity/parental leave. Many female researchers with children have to cope with this expectation – especially when they are in early stages of their careers - because the research profession is based on the concept of “continuous progress” and productivity. This perception may create an additional constraint for women. For this reason, there should be measures in place to support them. Another focus group stated that the timing of support is crucial. It should be provided in particular to young parents in the stage of the career when the scissors open, and the pipeline starts to leak¹⁶.

Q6. Work-private life balance

Participants in one focus group stressed that the data about workload are necessary to enhance its better repartition. They highlighted the dilemma between the measurement of working time and the need for autonomy and flexibility. Measuring of the working time is a usual practice in case of administrative staff but not in case of researchers. How can this practice be adapted for researchers while guaranteeing that they will not lose their flexibility?¹⁷ For young parents, a full time maternity or paternity leave may not be the ideal solution because researchers have to stay connected to progress in their discipline. A part time but extended parental leave might be more adapted to their professional constraints, but this could be against legal provisions.

Scientific work requires a lot of involvement. Working longer hours is perceived as something completely normal among researchers and management. This time-consuming involvement must be compensated by autonomy and flexibility in work to enable a minimal accommodation of the work-private life balance. It is still (even in the 21st century) more often necessary for women.

«*Education, culture still have a predominant role which is not in favour of women in research*», one participant concludes. Attribution of roles to men and women starts at a very young age. Even if their education is gender-sensitive, role models deriving from advertisements, TV, books, school manuals will have a strong influence. This has consequences both on women researchers themselves (difference men-women in their self-assessment) as well as on the persons in charge of recruitment, selection, promotion.

¹⁴ See minutes of the focus group Liège

¹⁵ See minutes of the focus group Rome

¹⁶ See minutes of the focus group Bratislava

¹⁷ See minutes of the focus group Liège

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Participants suggested several solutions to improve a healthy work-life balance¹⁸:

- Bring the family to the workplace (sometimes);
- Conduct a satisfaction survey among employees (asking them what would be an ideal situation for them), give them feedback and implement appropriate measures. This will raise awareness about the institution's practices and make authorities accountable;
- Allow work from home when possible. Focus on results rather than on control;
- Inform the employees about their rights and options in different situations (parental leave, medical leave etc.), about the institutional gender policy and practices;
- Ensure better integration of maternity leave provisions in the EU legislation;
- Provide flexibility necessary to accommodate research constraints (e.g. longer leave but only part-time, leaves accessible to both parents);
- Analyse workload to have a better work repartition (rules and process).E.g. measure the numbers of hours of teaching in proportion to the number of students;
- Take the mobility into account (travelling time), value mobility abroad of young mother researchers as it represents an extra investment for them;
- Organize child care facilities within the university;
- Enable flexible working time;
- Allow part-time work for leaders and flexibility during the career;
- Make support funds available for young researchers returning after a career break such as parental leave. Research funding organisations can play an important role to induce change.

Q7. Measures addressing discrimination

There is no unanimity about quotas in the four focus groups. Some think they are temporarily necessary, while others believe they will reinforce the stereotypes and introduce new kinds of discrimination.¹⁹The examples of existing measures include funding schemes exclusively for women or "at least 40% of each gender" rule.

Participants noted that the trend in Europe is a discursive but often non-implemented gender equality policy²⁰.In many cases, there are strong statements but when it comes to implementing them, to introducing effective changes, little to no resources are committed. Some good initiatives are taken but not maintained in the long run.

Participants noted that university authorities communicate very little about the implementation of their gender policy, its achievements and gender performance.

¹⁸ Collected from the four working groups

¹⁹ See minutes of the focus group Bratislava

²⁰ See minutes of the focus group Liège

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Good practices:

At one university, the Department for Gender Issues presented a set of ten measures to their Board, asking them to select five to be implemented.

Two universities have a gender "watchdog" in each faculty. This person is part of each recruitment process as an observer. If both sexes are not represented in the applications, the recruitment is postponed

All focus groups share the opinion that there is a lack of awareness of the issue among authorities, researchers and even women. The gender issue lacks visibility and thus recognition. For this reason, three focus groups stressed that data collection and analysis is crucial²¹. Participants recommended building up awareness through seminars addressing the gender issues and anti-bias training. Institutions should set up a strategy to increase the visibility of women researchers in the science market²².

Q8. Success factors in a researcher's career

Self-confidence is an important success factor. The institutional procedures should certainly change in many regards, but it is also important to help female researchers become more assertive in their job (e.g. provide training on leadership skills)²³. Institutions should counter discrimination and women themselves should fight against the self-discrimination. One focus group noted that the academic culture is still dominated by masculine values²⁴.

Other success factors:

- The possibility of counting on a supportive environment, both at work and in the private life;
- Access to family support measures (offered by the organisation but also provided by the national legislation, for instance incentives for parental leaves);
- Hard work (or even harder): It is felt that women, to be taken into consideration, are required to perform always a little bit better than men.
- Listening to the advice of supervisor, but being able to decide on your own;
- Strong ambition;
- Strong capacity to work in a team²⁵ and to network in parallel to leadership skills;
- Positive/inspiring models (e.g. PhD supervisor).

*"Academy is male coloured and universality is, in fact, a disguise for neutral masculine"*²⁶ This quote describes an implicit obstacle. Women researchers should realize that the academic world is not neutral, they do not

²¹ See minutes of the focus groups , Liège, Bratislava and Targoviste

²² See the He4She campaign of the university of Ghent

²³ See minutes of the focus groups Targoviste and Rome and the AKKA leadership programme <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/sweden/akka-leadership-programme>

²⁴ See minutes of the focus group Bratislava

²⁵ Training in teamwork is certainly valuable for both genders, but since it was perceived that women often have an « understatement » problem, the strengthening of their teambuilding capacity is especially important. Men are also seen as more capable of acting "in partnerships" with other men, while women are often not able to create alliances and strong networks. The team perspective can reinforce this capacity.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

have equal chances. Taking this into account will help them to be better prepared, and therefore it is also a success factor.

Quotes from female researchers:

Self-confidence: « *I can do it* »

Mentors: « *You can do it* »

Support from female peers: « *We work as a team* »

Q9. Recruitment and promotion

Participants noted that there are in fact two barriers to selection and promotions: the first filter is based on excellence and is explicit. The second filter is based on local and institutional requirements and is generally implicit. These conditions are supposed to be known and can have gendered implications. The influence of internal networks, gatekeeping or old men clubs are important here and not visible to every candidate²⁷. One focus group considered that blind reviews in selection and promotion processes are not realistic or effective²⁸.

Using the metaphor of a leaky pipeline which describes the situation when there are more women in the bottom positions than in the top ones, one can say that to induce change, it is important to unveil the functioning of the pipe, in addition to showing the leaks.

An alliance between administrative staff and researchers would bring about improvements in the procedures: administrative staff can be allies of professors who have the function of equality and diversity advisors.

Conditions for more equality:

- A transparent and fair hiring process
Procedures should be written and accessible, less dominated by implicit criteria.
Networking with other institutions is useful for collecting successful problem-solving methods, taking into account the diversity of approaches.
Involvement of heads of departments and stakeholders in the process is crucial.
- A redefined assessment of "excellence"
Excellence in research is defined mainly by masculine values. International mobility should be assessed according to new standards. The assessment of publications and achievements should be more flexible.

²⁶ Mosconi, 1989, quoted by Cardi C.(2005) "Les rapports sociaux de sexe à l'université: au cœur d'une triple dénegation", *L'Homme et la société*, vol. 4, n° 158, pp. 49-73 (<http://www.cairn.info/revue-l-homme-et-la-societe-2005-4-page-49.htm#no23>), page 61.

²⁷ See minutes of the focus groups Bratislava and Rome (More women than men in research but not at top levels)

²⁸ See minutes of the focus group Rome

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

- Respect, tolerance, appreciation of differences

Valuing differences will induce a change in the social environment. It is important to promote a culture of collaboration instead of the one of competition.

Institution's mission statements should be reviewed accordingly. Good examples should be promoted, as well as civil courage in expressing opinions or support²⁹.

Q10. Implementation of a mentoring programme

Two focus group stressed the importance of mentors. According to the participants, mentoring is not always successful. Training of supervisors is in this respect a wise safety measure: such training could be a condition to a promotion, although the motivation is an indispensable condition to take the role of a mentor.

Some existing programmes were mentioned, notably the Max Planck mentoring programme for women scientists *Minerva-FemmeNet*³⁰; the programme Astronomy Allies³¹, and the GARCIA project³².

Conditions for success and suggested solutions at various phases of a mentoring programme:

Programme start-up

Conditions for success: support from the authorities, funding.

Solutions: create a role of ambassador of the programme, measure results, communicate.

Recruitment of mentors

Conditions for success: selection of good mentors, allow enough time for the mentoring (1 to 1.5 years), sufficient information regarding mentor's role.

Solutions: testimonies, mentoring as an asset in the promotion.

Matching between mentors and mentees

Conditions for success: match based on the expectations of the mentee and capacities of the mentor, attention to the gender of both mentee and mentor (cross-gender relationship or same gender: the latter option seems to be more fruitful for both partners).

Solutions: possibility to refuse the choice of the mentor suggested by the authorities, clear "do's and don'ts", training offered to mentors, training mandatory for mentees.

Trajectory

Conditions for success: mentee should take the initiative and formulate his/her own targets (academic mentoring). The selection of the mentor is important: different people have different mentoring styles and ensuring the match is a delicate task.

Solutions: Agreements have to be met, the contract should be respected by both parties.

²⁹see the He for She campaign in Ghent University <https://www.ugent.be/bw/en/news-events/news/gender-equality-he-for-she-campaign-marc-van-meirvenne>

³⁰<http://www.minerva-femmenet.mpg.de/>

³¹Originally created for cases of sexual harassment, and based on the confidentiality of information provided

³²Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries (<http://garciaproject.eu/>) – a list of useful resources will be provided in the Gender and Diversity Management Guide for EURAXESS staff

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Evaluation

Conditions for success: measure the results and disseminate them.

Solutions: adapt the scheme in case of poor outcomes.

Q11. Mobility for women researchers

It is difficult to travel with children when there is a need to carry out fieldwork. Relocation for longer periods has its own difficulties: when a family moves to another country, parents often have to rearrange things using private services, as public options (schooling or crèche) may not be available. It is quite hard to cover childcare expenses with a monthly allowance as (mobile) researcher. In these cases, the possibility of finding "ready to use" information at an early stage or facilities or benefits available at the institutions – as in Nordic countries - can make a real difference. Relocation of spouse/partner can also be a huge problem: family support provided by institutions is therefore very helpful. Welcome services in research institutions may be more supportive if one relocates with family, so in this case, there should be a distinction between a researcher with family and a single one more than a "male-female" difference³³.

Q12. "Feminine" management leadership style

The feminine leadership style is qualified by participants of one focus group as more supportive and more empathic:

« More cooperative. »

« More participatory: I listen to the people before making decisions. »

« A woman will take the workload along with the leadership position, a man will delegate more. »

« I had to prove more than a man. »

Q13. Returning after a career break (mobility or parental leave)

One focus group noted that mobility is important, but sometimes the institution does not recognise its value if the researcher wants to return³⁴. Good practices in this field include the provision of incentives in case of researchers wishing to come back (in case they do not have a permanent contract before leaving), for instance by complementing already existing EU grants. Institutions should understand that a returning researcher can bring back a lot in terms of networking, experience, teamwork, attitude, etc. This should be valued in selections for permanent positions or in recruitment procedures in general. Although this is true both for men and women, female researchers may face more problems in moving (for instance when they have a family). Providing incentives based on experience abroad could be a means to give them an additional chance to gain this kind of experience, but with a real possibility to be considered when returning.

³³See minutes of the focus group Rome

³⁴ See minutes of the focus group Rome

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Conclusions:

Here are the conclusions of the 4 focus groups:

1. Insufficient awareness of the issue is being stressed unanimously, even among women themselves thus data collection and analysis thereof is needed.
2. Insufficient awareness of the issue is being stressed unanimously, even among women themselves thus data collection and analysis thereof is needed.
3. Addressing gender issues is beneficial for both men and women researchers, as well as for the quality of research.
4. Lack of parenthood-friendly policies is considered by many participants as the main challenge to address, beyond gender discrimination.
5. Flexibility in maternity/parental leave is crucial for researchers.
6. Parental leave provisions could be better harmonised across Europe.
7. More options to work from home, with focus on results rather than control would be welcome.
8. More services should be provided to mobile families (and specifically to returning mother/parent researchers after a parental leave).
9. Providing training for women researchers, PhD students, mentors and supervisors will help change the culture of the organisation in a softer way than rules and quotas. They should anyway complement these.
10. Measures should always be adapted to the local context. The situation of women researchers can vary dramatically across countries.
11. Assessment criteria for excellence in research and promotion should be reviewed.
12. Three conditions have been identified as essential for a successful career of a woman researcher: a well-prepared woman, a supportive (professional as well as family) environment, and positive institutional culture. Therefore, three types of actions are also needed: actions focused on the woman researcher, actions focused on the social environment (towards a gender-sensitive culture), and actions focused on the institutions (structural and procedural changes).

To reach excellence in research, Europe needs more gender sensitivity, more diversity, and more equality.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

EURAXESS can contribute to tackling this challenges through:

- **Making the EURAXESS Services for mobile researchers more gender-sensitive** (in addition to the already developed attention to cultural diversity). This can be done notably in two ways. First, by strengthening family-friendly competence, such as attention to the integration of the researcher not only in his/her professional environment , but also in his/her new social context, and paying attention to the situation of his/her family members: asking about the training, work or hobbies' needs of the partner, and of the children, setting up a mentoring programme, Second, by further developing services for mobile dual career couples.
- **Incorporating gender dimension in newly developed career development services.** EURAXESS Career Development Centres can provide trainings on gender equality and diversity, for both EURAXESS staff and researchers. Career development initiatives such as support for leadership development, mentoring or promotion of flexible career trajectories (e.g. return schemes after career breaks) can help to counter the leaky pipeline and gender scissors effects.
- **Supporting gender mainstreaming in human resources management for researchers (EURAXESS rights).** One of the EURAXESS tasks is to promote the principles of the European Charter for Researchers & European Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers (C&C) and their implementation through Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS₄R). EURAXESS members can encourage institutions implementing the HRS₄R to pay attention to gender equality aspects throughout this process.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Annexes

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Annex 1.1: FOCUS GROUP 1

10 March 2016, Liège, Belgium

Participants:

Role	Organisation	Country
Staff	University of Almeria	Spain
Prof	Université de Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Staff	Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Poznaniu	Poland
Staff	Ghent University	Belgium
Prof	Université de Liège	Belgium
Staff	Universiteit Hasselt	Belgium
Staff	Hochschule Trier	Germany
Staff	Université de Liège	Belgium
Staff	Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck	Austria
Staff	Université de Liège	Belgium
Prof	Universtié de Nancy	France
Staff	Vytautas Magnus University	Lithuania
Staff	Universiteit Hasselt	Belgium
Prof	Université de Liège	Belgium
Staff	Univerity of Gothenburg	Sweden (partim)
Prof	Université de Liège	Belgium
Staff	Universidade do Porto	Portugal
Staff	University of Trier	Germany
Prof	Université catholique de Louvain	Belgium
Staff	Università degli Studi dell'Insubria	Italy
Staff	Umwelt-Campus Birkenfeld, Hochschule Trier	Germany
Staff	Spiru Haret University	Romania
Staff	University of Vienna	Austria
Prof	Pädagogische Hochschule Tirol	Austria ³⁵

³⁵See https://prezi.com/isklha1brdjt/reflexive-coeducation/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Introduction: Focus group management

The participants were mainly university staff coming from Belgium or neighbouring countries. A few researchers/professors attended or gave a testimony. It would probably have been more fruitful to invite 2 distinct focus groups: one for staff, one for professors and researchers. The debates were not recorded.

Some participants were staying the whole week in the framework of a staff training. Two participants (Ghent³⁶ and Louvain³⁷) made a presentation. Other participants stayed the whole day (2 sessions of 3 hours), for the focus group. In the morning session, two participants (Luxembourg³⁸ and Hasselt³⁹) presented the situation in their university.

Q1. Knowledge of the Charter⁴⁰ and Code

The situation is heterogeneous. In Belgium, the majority of the universities know the Charter and Code and have adopted an action plan including gender issues. In the other countries, some universities have no gender policy, some others do have a well-established gender policy but it is not integrated into the perspective of the Charter and Code.

Q2. Data collection about Gender and diversity

Participants noted that the issues are similar throughout Europe and that the gap is persisting, even when gender issues were taken into account through legal measures or gender action plans. There are many women in Higher Education and research but not in the higher functions (vertical segmentation). Horizontal segmentation between 'male' tracks of studies and research (sciences and technology) and 'female' (human and social sciences) persists.

Participants stressed that common problems open the way to common solutions, and that exchanging about their failures and successes, building a network, was highly beneficial for their action in their institution.

What is measured by data collection:

- Quantitative data: reflect representativeness
- Qualitative data: discrimination (objective and subjective dimensions)
- Job satisfaction, working climate
- Stereotypes and prejudices
- Degree of support to a diversity management policy

For sensitive data collection, one often has to use self-declaration (for instance, about the feeling of discrimination, or belonging to the transgender group).

³⁶ See <http://www.ugent.be/en/ghentuniv/diversity-and-gender>

³⁷ See : http://garciaproject.eu/?page_id=52

³⁸ See

http://www.en.uni.lu/universite/presentation/organigramme/organigramme_rectorat_administration_centrale/delegue_a_l_egalite_des_chances/

³⁹ See <http://www.genderbalance.uhasselt.be/>

⁴⁰ <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter/european-charter>, see principle 2 of the Charter : Non-discrimination

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

« Without data, for us it is impossible to take action »: if these data are not collected, or not made public, the issue remains invisible, and no change can be requested.

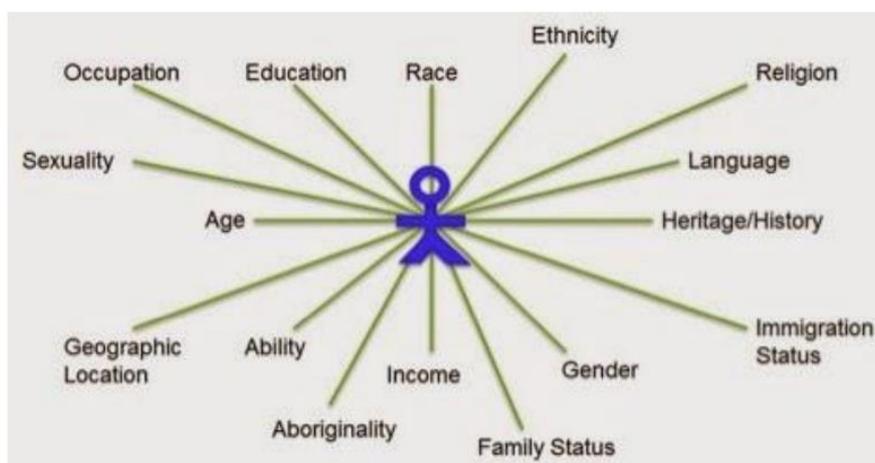
It is important to select indicators according to the policy to be implemented. The data must be collected and analysed.

Q3. Relation between gender and diversity: the concept of intersectionality

How to include diversity? Is there a risk to undermine efforts in favour of gender, although the goals are not yet reached? Intersectionality⁴¹ provides an answer: it allows to disaggregate - at the organisational level - the seemingly homogenous group of "women in science" by intersections and functions (age, nationality/ethnicity, citizenship status...).

Gender sensitivity paves the way to sensitivity to all types of discriminations.

Picture 1 Intersectional thinking⁴²



Q4. Status of researchers in the last 10 years

Increasingly the *individuals (men and women) have to cater for themselves* in a complex bureaucratic system of work and organizational culture, as much operating in an informal and negotiating way⁴³

Women tend to be more ambivalent when talking about their job (I like it, but: more male "engaged" and "optimistic" profiles, more "ambivalent" rationale female profiles). They are also more represented in the precarious positions (competitive and non-transparent selections, short-term contracts, scarcity of promotions, and little administrative and technical assistance).

Q5. Influence of stereotypes on careers (men/women's roles and values, status of people from different origins)

⁴¹ See Garcia project working paper 6, 'Toolkit for integrating Gender', page 23: garciaproject.eu/wp-content/.../GARCIA_working_paper_6.pdf

⁴² Picture taken from the power point presentation of University of Gent "Gender aan de UGent "

⁴³ See hereinabove, note 3

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Participants noted that the division of roles is still vivid, in private as well as professional sphere.

Science and family are two greedy institutions, but engagement in science is valorized, engagement in CARE is clandestine. There are interferences between the 2 spheres, although they are not acknowledged. The implication in research is possible thanks to the presence of another figure in the background, implicit, but nonetheless essential: that of the carer who is obliged to provide a temporal availability for the daily activities of care, household and of reproduction of persons, and other activities associated to private life.⁴⁴

Science is a passion, it requires a lot of involvement. This time-consuming involvement must be compensated by autonomy in work and flexibility which allow for minimal accommodation of the work-private life balance. This is still often more necessary for women.

« Education, culture still have a pregnant role which is not in favour of women in research »⁴⁵

Q6. Work-private life balance

Participants stressed that data about workload are necessary to enhance a better repartition. They highlighted the dilemma about measurement of working time versus autonomy and flexibility. If one measures the working time, it can be a protection. This exists for administrative staff but not for researchers. How do we adapt it for researchers while guaranteeing that they won't lose their flexibility? How do you count the outside meetings and travels?

Solutions to improve a healthy work-life balance:

- Bring family at work (sometimes);
- Setup a satisfaction survey for employees (asking them about their "dreamed" situation), give them feedback and implement measures in regard to the results of the survey. This will raise awareness about the institution's practices and make authorities accountable;
- Inform the employees about their rights, their choices, the different situations (parental leave, medical leave,...), about gender policy and practices. These guidelines can be published at the initiative of the quality/social services or HR Service;
- Analyse workload to have a better work repartition (rules and process): measure the numbers of hours of teaching, related to the numbers of students;
- Take the mobility into account (travelling time);
- Flexible work time: arrival between 7.45 and 9.30, departure between 16.00 and 17.30.

The ideal situation:

A good work-private life balance for everyone men and women, work alcoholic or not.

Q7. Discrimination, positive measures

Participants noted that in the best cases there is a discursive but often non-implemented gender equality policy.

⁴⁴ Idem

⁴⁵ Quote from one of the professors interviewed

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Participants noted that university authorities communicate very little about implementation of their gender policy, its achievements, gender performance.

In Gent University the Gender Department exposed to the Board a set of 10 measures, asking them to select 5.

In Universities of Luxembourg, Trier, there is a gender watchdog in each faculty. This person is part as an observer to each recruitment process.

If both sexes are not represented in the candidatures, the recruitment is postponed (Gent University and University of Trier).

Participants recommended building up awareness by gender seminars and anti-bias trainings.

Q8. Recruitment and promotion

Participants noted that there are in fact two barriers for selection and promotions: the first filter is based on excellence and is explicit. The second filter based on local and institutional requirements and is often implicit: these conditions are supposed to be known. This has gendered implications. The influence of internal networks, gatekeeping, old men's club is important here and not visible to every candidate.

To induce change, it is important to unveil the functioning of the pipe, in addition to the leaks (reference to the leaky pipeline: more women at the bottom than at the top).

An alliance between administrative staff and researchers would bring about improvements in the procedures: administrative staff can be allies of professors who are equality officers.

According to the participants, conditions for more equality are:

A transparent and fair hiring process

The procedures should be written and accessible, less dominated by implicit criteria.

The networking with other institutions is useful to collect successful problem-solving methods, taking in account the diversity of the approaches.

The involvement of heads of departments and stakeholders in the process is crucial.

A redefined assessment of "excellence"

Excellence in research is defined mainly according to masculine values. International mobility should be assessed according to new standards. There should be a space for vulgarization in the assessment of publications, and flexibility in assessing the achievements. It is important to convey this message to the higher levels.

Respect, tolerance, appreciation

These values will induce a change in the social environment. It is important to promote a culture of collaboration.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Participants suggested to change the institution's mission statements, to set and promote good examples, to promote civil courage in expressing opinions or support (see the He for She campaign in Ghent University⁴⁶).

Q9. Implementation of a mentoring programme

After listening to the experience of the University of Hasselt⁴⁷, participants identified conditions for success and suggested solutions at various phases of a mentoring programme.

Programme start-up:

Conditions for success: support from the authorities, funding.

Solutions: create a role of ambassador of the programme, measure results, communicate.

Recruitment of mentors:

Conditions for success: selection of good mentors, sufficient duration of the contract of mentoring (1 to 1,5 years), sufficient information regarding mentor role.

Solutions: testimonies, mentoring as an asset in promotion.

Matching between mentors and mentees:

Conditions for success: match based on the expectations of the mentee, attention to gender of both mentee and mentor (cross-gender relationship or same gender: the latter option seems more fruitful for both partners).

Solutions: possibility to refuse the choice of the mentor suggested by the rectorate, contract with do's and don'ts, training offered to mentors, training mandatory for mentees.

Trajectory:

Conditions for success: the mentee has to take the initiative and to formulate his/her own targets (academic mentoring). The choice of the rectorate will be influenced by the attitude of the mentor: there are different styles.

In case of a group mentoring: the mentor should take the lead, the mentees volunteer.

Solutions: Agreements have to be met.

Evaluation:

Conditions for success: measure the result and disseminate.

Solutions: adapt if necessary.

Q11. "Feminine management leadership style

The feminine leadership style is qualified by professors as more supportive, more empathic:

« *More cooperative* »

« *More participatory: I listen to the people before making decisions* »

« *A woman will take the workload along with the leadership position, a man will delegate more* »

« *I had to prove more than a man* »

⁴⁶See <https://www.ugent.be/bw/en/news-events/news/gender-equality-he-for-she-campaign-marc-van-meirvenne>

⁴⁷See <https://www.uhasselt.be/UH/16149-DoctoralSchools-Courses/mentoring.html>

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Things participants will bring back from this focus group:

- start to build a network (2x), know who to contact to get advice when I face a problem, nice people, nice contacts (2x), people with inspiring experience;
- learn from each other experience, knowledge exchange;
- There are similar problems across Europe;
- Common problems open the field for common solutions;
- Same feelings and problems at all universities;
- Diversity of the approaches;
- New ideas, good ideas;
- Ideas about how administrative staff can be allies of professors who are equality officers;
- How little our university communicates on gender performance, our strengths and weaknesses.

List of suggested initiatives:

Actions centred on the woman researcher

- Self-assessment;
- Knowledge about stereotypes, implicit bias, gender awareness;
- Mentoring;
- Networking;
- Training;
- Leadership;
- Distinct actions for early stage researchers, medium stage researchers, senior researchers;
- Analyse dropout;
- Limit precarious employment.

Actions centred on the institution (structural changes)

- Audit, data collection: sensitive data (policies differ) invisible data: unnoticed issues, special needs;
- Diversity: age, handicap, religion, ethnic origin, race, sexual orientation, social and economic background, gender;
- Intersectionality;
- What we measure: career steps, parental leave, combination work-private life, research fields, dropouts;
- For students: field of study, socioeconomic status;
- In many universities some data are not collected: race, sexual orientation, religion, religious practices, disabilities, « class », family status, family background, dropouts;
- Impact assessment (see EU project GEDII);
- Balance in decision making structures, recruitment and promotion, selection;
- Gender diversity management procedures;
- Sensitizing the stakeholders, the authorities, the hierarchy (gender awareness);
- Gender action plans: from statement to action, monitoring, evaluation, roadmap, support implementation;
- Working conditions, work-life balance;

Actions centred on the environment: promote a gender culture

- Mobility issues;
- Importance of the national, local context;
- Diversity of the styles or researchers.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment
Task 4.3 The diversity challenge
D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Table from the presentation of the University of Luxembourg at the Liège focus group

Factors influencing a gender strategy:	
Supporters	Obstacles
Gender as transversal axis	Gender as one separate aspect
Gender open-minded persons: empowerment; equality	Helper: Women need help (paternalistic feminism)
Institutional perspective	Focus on individuals
Systematic activities, spread across many shoulders	Single point actions with too few active persons and without a follow-up
Anchoring of strategic measures: making gender measures sustainable	Randomness of activities and measures; gender activities as passing and fashion trend
Gender as transversal axis	Gender as one separate aspect
Gender open-minded persons: empowerment; equality	Helper: Women need help (paternalistic feminism)
Institutional perspective	Focus on individuals
Networking between all actors	Focused on «special» persons
Political decision on institutional level	Based on goodwill of one person
Coherence with national and international policies	Isolated in-house produced ideas
Intersectional perspective: Gender in interplay with race, class, age etc.	Considering gender as the only dimension/category of possible discrimination
Paradigm shifting: from a binary to a pluralistic view: gender as continuum	Remaining on a dualistic perspective including traditional stereotypes as basis for any action
Acknowledgment of more than two gender	Persisting on a female vs. male perception
Gender plurality as normality including inter- and transgender	Inter- and transgender as apart from the so-called normal binarity

Source: presentation "How to reach, maintain and continuously develop gender balance? Lessons learnt at the University of Luxembourg."

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Annex 1.2: FOCUS GROUP 2

24 May, 2016, Bratislava, Slovakia

Participants:

Three types of participants were invited to the workshop:

- Researchers having an expertise on gender equality in research;
- Researchers without expertise on gender equality in research;
- Other stakeholders representing institutions that are involved in creating the framework for HR policies in research and/or that could contribute to fostering gender equality in research.

The list of participants is included in the following table:

Position	Organisation
Policy officer	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport
Member of management	Slovak Research and Development Agency
Horizon 2020 NCP	Centre of Scientific and Technical Information
Researcher, gender expert	Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology
Researcher, vice dean, gender expert	Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Arts
Researcher, gender expert	University of Trnava, Faculty of Arts
Researcher, vice rector, gender expert	Matej Bel University un BanskaBystrica, Faculty of Arts
Administrative and support staff	Comenius University in Bratislava
Researcher	Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Management
Researcher, head of institute	Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)
Administrative and support staff	Institute of Hydrology of SAS
Researcher, head of institute	Institute for Forecasting of SAS
Researcher, head of institute	Institute of Informatics of SAS
Scientific manager	Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information
Researcher, gender expert	Czech National Contact Centre for Gender & Science

The focus of discussion was mostly on the institutional support and targeted promotion of gender equality at research institutions. The structure of discussion was centred on four main questions/topics:

- General perception of the issue.
- Key problems related to the gender equality in research.
- Gender equality support and measures at research institutions.
- Introducing the successful institutional strategies.

Summary of the discussion:

Q1: General perception of the of the issue

Participants briefly explained what their position on the topic is:

- Some of the participants were professionally interested in the topic – they were gender experts or had an experience with the projects dealing with gender equality in research. It is therefore not surprising that this group considered the topic very important.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

- The participants without the expertise in the field mentioned different reason why they consider the topic to be highly relevant:
 - Participants who have the leadership experience (supervisors, managers) often referred to the experience they have with the young members of their teams. They witness difficulties that young female researchers (or researchers with parenting responsibilities in general) have to face and are aware of the lack of institutional support for them.
 - The participants from the technology-related fields also referred to the low share of women in their disciplines. While some did not consider it to be a major problem (this is the way it is) other mentioned there is a need to do something about not only from the idealistic perspective but also from the purely pragmatic point of view.
 - One participant with a reach experience in the international environment mentioned that she agreed to participate because after she came back from abroad she was surprised by the lack of any institutional provisions concerning gender equality at Slovak research intuitions. Now being the head of one of the SAS institutes, she is thinking what can be done about it and who to collaborate with.

Q2: Key problems related to the gender equality in research

Discussion focused mostly on the work-family balance. Other aspects of the gender equality in research were only mentioned briefly.

- The family – work balance was the most stressed issue among the participants. Caring responsibilities affect the careers of young researchers considerably. Parental leave can last up to three years in Slovakia (but also in other V₄ countries). Returning to work after such a long period of time might be very challenging, especially when the research is becoming more and more dynamic. But even after they are back at works, researchers with small children face many obstacles to their career progress. It is more difficult for them to get involved in the research mobility, to publish a sufficient number of high-quality publications and they start to lag behind. These is where the famous scissors start to open.
- The participants agreed, that there is a lack of institutional support for these researchers. Several mentioned that this got even worse compared to the pre-transformation period (before 1989) since on the one hand research became more competitive, on the other, the institutional support to working partners became less available
- Low availability of funding for young researchers returning after the career break was mentioned as a crucial problem. Funding agencies mostly use the publication record over the period of the last 5 years as one of the key evaluation criteria in the majority of the funding schemes. This strongly disadvantages young researchers returning after the parental leave. This problem was mentioned by both gender experts and non-experts who referred to the experience of young researchers in their teams. Participants also asked representative of the funding body whether they make any gender analysis of data about the grant applicants and recipients. The answer was, that only very basic analysis is made (share of women).
- Low share of women in research in general and at higher academic and management levels might seem to be less alarming issue than in the some of the western countries at the first sight. There are more women in research compared to Western Europe and they are also quite well represented in the midlevel academic and decision-making positions (as heads of departments, vice deans). However, they remain strongly underrepresented on the very top level of both

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

academic (number of holders of academic title of professors) and management hierarchies (deans, rectors). Participants referred to the very masculine cultures of many academic institutions (anecdotes about the macho type "Mr. Professor" were mentioned).

- Very low awareness about the topic was mentioned as a key problem particularly by the gender experts. They complained that despite the many years of their work, activism and publications on the topic they still need to explain the academic community very basic concepts related to gender equality in research.

Q3: Gender equality support and measures at research institutions

Participants agreed that there is a lack of institutional provisions supporting gender equality at research institutions in Slovakia. Several institutions introduced partial measures, mostly due to their involvement in EU funded projects. In the near future Structural funds of the EU could also be used to introduce some practical measures (such as e.g. childcare assistance for the university staff).

However, generally the need to introduce more systematic measures towards supporting gender equality on the institutional level is not high on the agenda of the management of Slovak research institutions. Participants mentioned several reasons explaining this situation:

- The topic is considered no to be priority. This view is shared not only by the management but also by wider research community („with so many other problems to be solved, gender equality is not a top priority“).
- It was also mentioned, that many consider introduction of measures supporting gender equality to be problematic because of the historical experience from the communist era. By that time strong formal support for the gender equality including quota systems existed. This causes strong opposition to any measures that could lead to what is perceived to be "positive discrimination".
- Surprisingly, new obstacles with "ideological background" also emerge. One of the participants shared his experience with the introduction of the GEP at their university. GEP should have been introduced as one of the activities of the projects funded by FP7. But in order to convince the management to provide the support for the plan is had to be reframed as a Diversity Action Plan (because otherwise it could be perceived as "a promotion of gender ideology".
See: http://www.conservapedia.com/Gender_ideology
- The case of the Czech Republic was presented as an example of a good practice. Although the situation used to be similar to this of Slovakia, it starts to change and support for the introduction of GEP is provided (National Contact Centre for Gender & Science plays a key role in this process <http://www.soc.cas.cz/en/department/national-contact-centre-gender-science>).

Q4: Which measures should be introduced?

The last part of a discussion concentrated on what should be the most important steps to improve the state of the gender equality in research:

- The participants agreed that support for young researchers with parenting duties should be a priority.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

- Funding bodies could play a key role in fostering the gender equality. If they would introduce the measures targeting gender equality it would have a broad impact on the whole system, since every institution that would apply for funding would have to deal with it. Also, the evaluation criteria should be more sensitive towards researchers returning back after the career break and special grant schemes supporting this target group could be introduced.
- Question how to get the support of management institutions for the introduction of GEP was also discussed. Several approaches were suggested.
- Importance of analysing and presenting data on gender equality in research was stressed. Data and statistics “work” in the academic community and can help to persuade the management to act. Much more statistics are currently available than it used to be, but there is still a need for more. In addition academic institution disposes of many interesting data that could be analysed according to gender but are not exploited sufficiently.
- Several participants mentioned that it might help to stress that gender equality concerns both men and women. Men will also benefit from support provided to parents (gender experts replied that this is what they are trying to communicate for a long time already).
- “Pragmatic framing” might also be suggested. Example of project attracting women to IT was mentioned – the project that was initiated from the bottom got a strong support of management, because of the need to attract more students regardless of their gender.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Annex 1.3: FOCUS GROUP 3

10 July 2016, Targoviste, Romania

Participants

Participants in the focus group in Targoviste were women and men researchers as well as women and men academic management.

Participants were from Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. They were a mix of "soft" and "hard" sciences, as well as research and academic management. Two of them were senior researchers with experience also as supervisors of PhD / young researchers. They were from the following organisations:

Position	Organisation	Country
EURAXESS member	Sofia University	Bulgaria
Diversity expert	Eudaimonia Solutions	Bulgaria
Diversity expert	Eudaimonia Solutions	Bulgaria
Researcher	Sofia University	Bulgaria
Researcher	Ruse university	Bulgaria
Researcher	Plovdiv University	Bulgaria
Researcher	Valahia University	Romania
Researcher	Valahia University	Romania
Researcher	Valahia University	Romania
EURAXESS member	The Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine	Romania
EURAXESS member	Mechanical Engineering Faculty Of University Of Nis	Serbia
EURAXESS member	The Centre for Research & Technology, Hellas	Greece

Q1: Have you ever personally felt discriminated? Do female researchers have to do more than men to succeed? If you had ever been discriminated, did you feel the support of the institution and the professional environment? (*QUESTION TO RESEARCHERS -If you're staff, answer based on observations of researchers in your organization*)

- *More focus should be placed on improving the capacities of women, and changing their mentality. **
- In general, the issue of gender diversity needs higher visibility and promotion in order to raise awareness.
- There is a need also to promote more diversity among staff, in research and engineering teams, and in general researchers need better management and intercultural adaptation skills.
- Also, the visibility of females on the science market is not developed, the institution could develop strategy for more visibility.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Q2: How do you feel about work-private life balance? Are there interferences? Are they acknowledged in your lab or department? Do the institutional measures make it easier to combine work with private life?(QUESTION TO RESEARCHERS -If you're staff, answer based on observations of researchers in your organization)

- Extra work and longer hours is perceived as something absolutely normal among researchers and management. Therefore, maternity leave for women and their involvement in management and research becomes quite a challenge, which prevents women from even considering undertaking such work.
- At the same time, working from home –which could provide some relief—is not perceived well. Institutions need new policies, which support work-life balance, and stimulate and recognize achieved results rather than focus on controlling mechanisms which limit opportunities.

Q3: There are more men than women in the top positions and in general there is very little diversity. What do you think about it? What are the reasons for this phenomenon? Do you think the situation now is better compared to 20 or 10 years ago? (QUESTION TO RESEARCHERS & STAFF).

- Yes, clearly there is disproportion. For example the deans are mostly men and the administration departments are mostly women. It's a matter of culture, which needs to be improved.
- Quotas for recruitment of females should be considered as an intermediary measure.
- Also, obtaining additional skills can create opportunities for positive change.

Q4: What do you think about stereotypes (men/women's roles and values, status of people from different origins)? Do you think they have an influence in your work? In what way? (QUESTION TO STAFF, If you're a researcher, answer based on your observations in your organization.)

- ***Strengths and weaknesses are stereotypes. For example the weakness of females, their ability to have attention for details, their patience. Also patriarchal family and society archetypes, the speed of actions, strong work as a territory of men.
- Intercultural issues create lots of stereotypes.

FACILITATOR's NOTES:

*The overall opinion initially was that there isn't much discrimination and neither gender, nor multicultural diversity is such a big problem within the countries of the participants. At the same time, as the conversation evolved participants agreed that there is not enough awareness about the actual problems and they started seeing many more layers which remain invisible at first. That is a reflection of the fact that there is little to no discussion being held on the subject.

**One of the challenges is self-discrimination. Women themselves put restrictions on their dreams and careers and considerable efforts need to be made to raise their self-awareness and self-confidence.

***Men and women have differences and stereotypes are there for a reason. That is not to say that women cannot do what men do and vice versa. However, to improve gender and other diversity in academia and other environments, we need first to understand how we differ as human beings, become more aware and confident with who we are, and develop the awareness and capacity to function well in a diverse environment.

In conclusion, the discussions in the focus group confirmed that the level of knowledge about diversity (and gender inequality in specific) remains superficial and people of both genders act out of relatively low

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

level of awareness, blind spots and unconscious bias. That reconfirms the importance of continuing work on diversity as something at the core of any personal, group or societal transformations. For maximum results, future activities should include opportunities for exposure to high levels of diversity as that provokes expanding of current worldviews and moving to a higher level of consciousness.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Annex 1.4: FOCUS GROUP 4

17 January 2017, Rome, Italy

Participants

Participants in the focus group in Rome were women researchers, with experience in mobility. The majority of them were researchers in "hard" sciences. Two of them were senior researchers with experience also as supervisors of PhD / young researchers. They were from the following organisations:

- INAF, National Institute of Astrophysics
- Elettra - Sincrotrone S.C.p.A. Trieste (via Skype at AREA Science Park)
- Sapienza University – Rome
- LUMSA University – Rome
- ICTP, International Centre for Theoretical Physics – Trieste (via Skype at AREA Science Park)
- University of Udine (via Skype at AREA Science Park)

Observers (administrative staff): from INAF and AREA Science Park.

Q1. Mobility for women researchers

First, the question of experiences concerning mobility -and relevant difficulties encountered- was raised. The issue of **relocation of women researchers with family/children** was first addressed.

The following problems have been reported concerning mobility: first of all, it is difficult to travel with children when there is a need to carry out fieldwork. On the other hand, also relocation for longer periods has its own difficulties: when you move to another country you have often to rearrange things using private services, as public options (i.e. schooling or crèche) may not be available any longer (public services already booked, no places available, etc.). It is quite hard to cover childcare expenses with a monthly allowance as (mobile) researcher. In these cases, the possibility of finding "ready to use" information at an early stage or (in the best cases) facilities or benefits available at the institutions (crèche) – as in Nordic countries, for ex. Norway - can make a real difference.

Relocation of spouse/partner is a huge problem: family support provided by institutions is therefore very helpful. It has been reported that in some cases (i.e. when the partner/spouse works in the same research field – the case reported was in Astrophysics), the possibility of relocating the spouse can be part of the negotiations with the hosting institutions (generally it works better for already well-established researchers). Welcome services: institutions may be more supportive if you relocate with family, so in this case there is a difference between a researcher with family/single researcher more than a "male-female" difference.

More in general, **mobility is important** but sometimes **the institution does not recognize** its value if the researcher would like to return: in some cases, it was reported, it is even advisable not to try to go back to the same institution. Good practices in this field include the possibility by the institution to provide some incentives in case of researchers wishing to come back (when they do not have already a permanent contract), for instance by complementing already existing EU grants. Institutions should understand that a mobile researcher can bring back a lot in terms of networking, experience, teamwork, attitude etc. This should be valued in selections for permanent positions or in recruitment procedures. Although this is true both for men and women, however, women researchers may face more problems in moving (i.e. when they have children /family): providing incentives based on experience abroad could be a means to give

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

them an additional chance to gain experience in another country, but with a real possibility to be considered when returning.

Q2. Work/private life balance

It was reported that for women it is still very hard to have a real balance between professional and private life. For instance, legislation on **maternity leave** may be different across countries and may depend also on the type of contracts. In the US, for instance, post-doc contracts do not always cover maternity leave (i.e. it is not paid). In Italy and in other EU countries generally maternity leave lasts 4 to 5 months, with full salary. In Slovenia maternity leave can cover up to 12 months with a full salary. **Whatever the legislation, in any case generally a woman researcher is requested to perform research activities even during her maternity leave.** This is a fulfilment that every woman researcher with children – especially if she is at an early career stage - has to face, because the researcher profession is based on the concept of “continuous progress” and productivity; the difference with other kind of jobs is that generally in other types of activities you are allowed to have a break (although if one is *directly* responsible for a specific activity, there are similar obstacles).

In the research field, losing one's own network or the regular contacts with your research group may result in a loss of competitiveness (decrease in productivity) or -in worst cases- in replacements in the research team. There is no “written” rule, but a woman researcher feels/knows that she has to work anyway, even if benefiting from a maternity leave. This may result in an additional difficulty for women. For this reason, there should be measures in place to support them. In particular, support from the institutions and flexibility on how the maternity leave can be “tailored” could be suggested.

Possible ways to minimize this risk have been identified: for instance, special distance tools may be activated by the institution in order to keep the researcher regularly linked to her research group and facilitate the contacts.

The availability of national services and the degree of State intervention can significantly change the situation (i.e. for instance if you have more months paid for maternity leave or if there are national provisions for free public services for childcare, etc.) and are a valuable tool to make women feel more confident and supported.

Q3. Supervisors/ mentors

For sure there are different “styles” in performing the role of supervisor: the researchers that participated in the focus group did not feel at any time in their career to be really discriminated based on gender. However, the experiences reported show that in fact not always a supervisor can give the right advice. Being a researcher is a challenging career, and this is true both for men and women, but from the point of view of the most experienced researchers in the group (who have been supervisors themselves) often talented women (students, PhD) may be affected – more than men – by a feeling of “not being able” (lack of self-confidence). On this issue, specific mentoring programmes can make the difference. The institution could for example organize training courses or set up groups of more advanced researchers, in order to approach the issue with young women researchers. It was stressed that it is important to include in the group profiles of researchers of almost the same level but a little bit more advanced than the researchers who participate in the mentoring initiative. Research profession is very demanding, so it is extremely important to learn not to be afraid of difficulties and challenges. In some cases, it was reported that having a very inspiring model of supervisor (especially if woman) can help.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

A training for supervisors has also been recommended: they should know how to support younger people and especially women. Inviting supervisors to a training is not obvious, notably for the seniors. Maybe adding this training in the list of criteria for promotion could help, although motivation of the supervisor remains the key factor of success. Of course, "creating" a new professional profile, who would be in charge of these activities, would also help a lot.

Some counselling would be necessary in particular at PhD level, as generally PhD students are unaware of "where they are going".

Some existing programmes were mentioned, i.e. Max Planck mentoring programme for women scientists "Minerva-Femmenet" (<http://www.minerva-femmenet.mpg.de/>); the programme "Astronomy Allies" (originally created for cases of sexual harassment, and based on the confidentiality of information provided); the project GARCIA – Gendering the Academy and Research: combating Career Instability and Asymmetries (<http://garciaproject.eu/>). The final report of the 4 focus groups will include a list of projects supported by the EU in the field of Gender and Research.

Q4. Recruitment/Selection /Top positions

All participants agreed that it is important that people get accustomed to see women in top positions. Not all participants agreed on "quota" for women in order to reach a gender balance in selections/top position, but some of them were absolutely convinced that there is a need to "force" the situation to attain a real gender equality in selection processes, also through quotas. Other means, such as "blind reviews" in selection processes, are not realistic/effective.

Progression for top positions often follows a "male" pattern, i.e. strong network, solidarity etc. that generally women do not use among them.

On the other hand, as male role models exist, women tend to follow those models at an individual level, and this does not help solidarity.

It has been recommended to spread more information about existing (structured) programmes for women and their results (ex. Max Planck). A review would be helpful.

Q5. Success factors

Some success factors in a woman researcher's career have been identified, as follows:

- Possibility of counting on a supportive environment, both at work and in the private life (i.e. partner/husband);
- To have access to family support measures (offered by the organization but also in national legislation, i.e. for instance incentives for paternity leaves);
- To work hard (even harder, for women: it is felt that women are required to perform always a little bit better than men, to be taken into consideration.);
- To be aware that not always supervisors have the right approach for your career: listen to them, but also be able to decide on your own;
- To have a strong temperament;

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

- To strengthen the capacity to work in team⁴⁸;
- To have the chance of meeting positive /inspiring models (i.e. PhD supervisor).

⁴⁸Training in team working is certainly valuable for both genders, but since it was said that women often have an « understatement » problem, the fact of strengthening their team building capacity helps. Also, men – according to the opinions gathered during the focus group - are more capable to act “in partnerships” with other men (a sort of “gender” alliance), while often women are not able to create alliances and strong networks. The team perspective can reinforce this capacity.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

Annex 2: Focus group methodology

1. Focus group management

Participants (12 maximum):

It is better if only one category of stakeholders is represented in the single focus group (either researchers or staff). If feasible, two homogeneous focus groups could be organised in the single country – one for each category of stakeholders. Mixing participants could restrict their openness.

- Who should participate:
 - Staff: gender counsellors, HR experts, gender units' representatives, EURAXESS staff, welcome centres staff, international relations staff.
 - Staff with gender expertise is sometimes lacking, but employees who deal with the recruitment or other Human Resources activities could be involved.
 - Researchers: international researchers should also be involved
- "Virtual" participation using the videoconferencing tools is also possible.
- The focus group can be integrated into or attached to other events for support staff and/or researchers.

Geographical scope of the focus group:

Regional (cross-border) or local (national) participants? Both options are feasible and depend on the possibilities of the particular country organising the event.

Content of the focus group:

- Focus groups in all countries should follow the same set of questions to ensure some comparability.
- Presentation of some good practice or institution with advanced diversity support services or having a gender equality plan in place can be included in the focus group agenda (to give participants something they can take home with them)
- Duration: 1.5 hour is optimal, but can be extended if there is a presentation before the discussion.

Preparation for the focus group:

- How to handle different levels of knowledge of participants – reference to some materials dealing with the focus group topic could be included in the invitation letter.
- Discussion questions should not be distributed to participants in advance – a certain level of spontaneity is necessary for the focus group.

The role of a moderator is crucial – the moderator must be familiar with questions and sub-questions so that he or she is able to moderate the discussion when necessary. The discussion should be moderated but not directed. Issues raised spontaneously can also provide useful information. It is important for the moderator to take time to prepare the meeting. To have read the questions beforehand, to select them (maximum 8-10 questions) and to have a prepared timeframe, although it is also important to allow people to express themselves, it is a matter of balance. The moderator should know what the answers can be, to be able to rephrase the question, ask sub-questions, and provide more concrete examples. Indeed, if the participants keep silent, it is also important to have prepared sub-questions.

If possible, the moderator should be assisted by two other colleagues in the role of observers: one should take notes or record the discussion (In this case, do not forget to ask permission of the participants before

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

the focus group starts. The statements should remain anonymous.) and write down the recordings. The second observer should watch and take note of non-verbal attitudes.

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment
Task 4.3 The diversity challenge
D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

2. Letter of invitation to send to the participants (template):

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

As a partner to the H2020 project TOP III, whose objective is to develop and offer new services to mobile researchers in Europe through the EURAXESS network (see <http://ec.europa.eu/EURAXESS/>), I have the pleasure to invite you to a half-day focus group session taking place in ... on

Its theme will be: Promoting gender equality and diversity for researchers: is the task finished? Exchange of practices and procedures.

During this session, we want to explore what administrative staff at universities can do to ensure equal chances for all researchers. We shall focus on the largest minority - women in research - as an obvious case study but take into account the other ones as well. Diversity is an important asset for research, because it multiplies the approaches and better reflects the needs of our societies. Gender is also one of the factors to be considered when applying for an H2020 project.

We hope to gather about 12 persons coming from various universities from the region to share our questions, experiences and to enrich our practices in this field.

Target group: Administrative & management staff committed to including a gender and diversity component in their work (strategy, human resources, international relations, finance etc.).

Working language will be English. In the framework of the TOP project, travel expenses for this session can be covered.

We would be very glad if you could join us. Through this focus group, our aim is to gather useful information and expertise to be shared with the whole EURAXESS Network. In this respect, your contribution would be very useful.

We are available for any additional information you may need.

We thank you in advance for your interest and hope to have the chance to welcome you in

Best regards,

Work Package 4 Researcher's environment

Task 4.3 The diversity challenge

D 4.4 Synthesis of the 4 focus groups

3. List of questions (8-10 questions maximum)

The selection of questions is very important. Questions should not be distributed to participants in advance – a certain level of spontaneity is necessary for the focus group.

Questions for researchers:

1. Tell us about your professional itinerary as a woman researcher, international researcher or migrant researcher.
2. How do you perceive the evolution of the researcher status in the last 10 years?
3. What were the success factors for you?
4. Have you ever felt discriminated? Did you have to do more than men, more than local researchers? Did you feel the support of the institution/professional environment?
5. How do you feel about the work-private life balance? Do you see any interferences between the two? If so, are these acknowledged in your lab/department? Are there institutional measures to make it easier to combine work with private life?
6. There are more men than women in the top research positions. What do you think about it? What are the reasons for this phenomenon? Do you think the situation improved compared to 20 or 10 years ago?
7. Is mobility more difficult for women than for men?
8. Is there a "feminine"/"western" management leadership style?
9. Are there specific measures taken by your university to address the issue of equality among researchers? Which are they? Is there a place where you can make suggestions/complain?
10. Do you have suggestions to deal with the issue of re-entering researchers after a career break? Is this objective reality in your field of research?

Questions for staff:

1. Do you know about the Charter & Code?
2. Is your institution collecting data about gender and diversity? Are these data public? What is measured? Quantitative, qualitative, sensitive data? What are the sources of information?
3. What do you think about stereotypes (men/women's roles and values, the status of people from different origins)? Do you think they have an influence on your work? In which way?
4. Which are your university values?
5. How can the diversity be included in your university? Is it going to undermine efforts in favour of gender or on the contrary to reinforce them? Do you think your institution has reached its goals in this respect? What do you think of intersectionality?
6. Does your institution include gender/minority sensitivity, positive measures in recruitment, promotion processes? Is there a gender & diversity equality policy in your institution?
7. What could be done in the university to improve the situation? Are there some training facilities for the university staff in the field of gender & diversity?
8. Does your institution implement measures to deal with the issue of re-entering to research after a career break?