

GENDER-RESPONSIBLE RULES FOR PARTICIPATION IN HORIZON EUROPE

The European Commission has launched a proposal for the next EU Research & Innovation Programme (2021-2027), “Horizon Europe”. This Briefing Paper is a call to action to properly integrate the principle of gender equality policies in the Rules for Participation in Horizon Europe. The aim is to strengthen gender equality in the ERA community and structures as well as to innovate gender equality policy implementation in the scientific field.

One of the objectives of the new Framework Programme related to the rules for participation has been summarized as “simpler rules”. The aim is to improve the financial and administrative performance of the new programme. This will be achieved by increasing the use of simplified grant forms where appropriate, and continuing with a single set of rules principle. The EC ensures that the Regulation respects fundamental rights and observes the principles recognized in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. Moreover, the key elements of the proposal evaluation and selection system of the predecessor programme Horizon 2020 with its particular focus on excellence should be maintained.

Former article 16 (Gender equality) of the H2020 Regulation has been redrafted as a paragraph in Article 6 on the Implementation and forms of EU funding as follows:

In order to ensure this new article and also the statement made in the preamble of the Proposal regarding the integration of the gender dimension in R&I content and the monitoring through all stages of the research cycle, GENDERACTION makes the following recommendations for Horizon Europe:

- **To develop Temporary Special Measures (positive action) in the Rules for Participation in order to promote women’s participation in Horizon Europe projects, especially gender balance of project leaders.**

* The Interim Evaluation on Gender in H2020 estimated that only 25% of projects were headed by women.

* The Helsinki Group on Gender in R&I (hereafter HG) asked for a procedure to better monitor funded projects in terms of gender balance in research teams.

The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in bodies such as expert groups.

article 6.9. Proposal
for a Regulation

- **To design effective work-life balance measures to be applied in Horizon Europe projects in consultation with gender stakeholders.**

* HG asked for additional funding to recruit a cover post or to extend the research period in cases of family/parental leave.

- **To include an obligation for partner institutions to guarantee equal pay in the proposals submitted for funding.**

- **To strengthen the requirements and monitoring of the integration of the gender dimension in the proposals through sex/gender analysis box in applications and gender expertise within the consortium.**

* The Interim Evaluation on Gender in H2020 concluded that there has been a poor integration of the gender dimension in research content.

* HG asked to explicitly require applicants to develop a sex and/or gender analysis and to include a gender expert

in the consortia for those topics explicitly mentioning gender.

- **To include Gender-Responsible Research & Innovation issues among the award criteria (article 25 of the Proposal for a Regulation) so that proposals shall be evaluated on the basis of excellence, including the integration of sex/gender analysis where research concerns humans or has impact on humans, impact, quality and efficiency of the implementation.**

* The Interim Evaluation on Gender in H2020 concluded that evaluation criteria and the way how they are applied need to be reviewed to avoid gender bias in the assessment of researchers' achievement.

* HG recommended that evaluation forms and monitoring guidelines include questions regarding gender in R&I as well as to consider this a precondition of excellence point awards.

- **To ensure gender balance in the composition of evaluation committees and evaluators (article 26 of the Proposal for a Regulation), inclusion of gender experts among evaluators and gender training for evaluators to combat gender bias in evaluation.**

* The Interim Evaluation on Gender in H2020 concluded that gender expertise is needed in expert groups, evaluation panels and advisory groups in all scientific fields.

* **HG recommended compulsory gender training required for evaluators as well as the inclusion of gender experts among evaluators for topics explicitly mentioning gender.**

Finally, the Proposal aims to maintain the key elements of the proposal evaluation and selection system of the predecessor programme Horizon 2020 with its particular

focus on excellence. It must be recognized that the **integration of gender dimension in R&I is a crucial element of research excellence**, and without it, R&I offer only partial and often completely wrong solutions and answers, as recent studies confirm.

References

European Commission (2018) *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination.* [And Annexes to it]

Helsinki Group on Gender in R&I (2017) *Position paper on H2020 interim evaluation and preparation of FP9.*

European Commission (2017) *Interim Evaluation: Gender Equality as a crosscutting issue in Horizon 2020.*

Get in touch with us:

www.genderaction.eu
info@genderaction.eu
@GENDERACTION_EU



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