




D 5.3. Report on “Mapping promising practices and policy advice on gender mainstreaming in European Funds for research and innovation”

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Executive summary

The aim of WP5 in the GENDERACTION project was to provide strategic advice on gender equality policies in R&I. Particularly, the purpose of WP5 was to support the work of the SWG GRI and relevant EU and Member States stakeholders regarding gender equality in the implementation of Horizon 2020, as well as in the preparation of the current Framework Programme for R&I and the next European Structural Funds. This Deliverable report presents the work carried out in WP5 during the lifetime of the project¹, taking into account that the target audience is not only the European Commission (EC) but also the gender & science community and other stakeholders in Europe.

First, we reflect on how to provide policy advice on gender from a sister project in section 1 *Providing policy advice from a European project*. We analyse the gap between our assumptions and expectations and the reality regarding the path of the policy cycle, the influence of the different actors, the sensitivity to and knowledge on gender at the EU level, among other factors, when dealing with politics and gender.

Second, we describe the strategic advice provided by GENDERACTION in terms of gender and the R&I policy: the analyses done, the recommendations made, the audiences targeted, the different tools used (policy briefs, trainings, contacts...), among others. We classify the policy advice provided in four categories: section 2.1. *Influencing negotiations for Horizon Europe*, which constituted a major part of WP5 until the end of 2020; section 2.2. *Long-term policy advice*, where the project has addressed the increasingly important role of RFOs, revived the topic of positive action measures and anticipated key issues for the future; and section; section 2.3. *Liaison with MS and other ERA stakeholders* that accounts for the most dynamic parts of the policy coordination; and section 2.4. *Introducing gender in Mission and Partnerships*, which was introduced in the final stage of the project. In section 2.5. *Issuing high-impact recommendations*, we will take stock of the results and impact of the policy advice delivered.

Third, we explain our foray into the domain of **European Structural Funds**, why they are relevant to advance gender in R&I and the best ways to do so, with an emphasis on their potential to close the gap between more and less experienced countries in gender equality policies in R&I. We indicate promising practices identified and used as role models for others in our policy advice.

Fourth, we take stock of the promising work carried out on gender and SDGs introduced through AMD-741466-27. Section 4 *Policy Benchmark on SDGs and gender* will summarize the development of a systematic research review, policy overview, and policy briefs on gender and SDGs, targeting ERA stakeholders and national RPOs and RFOs.

Finally, in section 5 we summarise the lessons learnt by the team in charge of the strategic policy advice and the conclusions reached from all the practical work and analysis done. The aim is to go beyond the mere description of the actions in order to provide relevant information to the policy community on the skills we have acquired and the tips we can provide to others whose aim is to influence policy development in the future. Moreover, this report will also be used as a self-

¹ GENDERACTION project will also report on the guidance for MS regarding Gender Equality Plans as a result of the introduction of GEPs as an eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe, that has been provided by ISAS under WP5. This new task was added during the project extension once the need for training and capacity-building across Europe was identified. Project coordinator has requested an extension for the completion of this task in order to adapt to the response times of the SWG GRI since the involvement of the group is essential.

evaluation for the GENDERACTION consortium so as to help us design future activities on policy advice that can have even more impact and contribute to the sustainability of the project.

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List of abbreviations

EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
ERA	European Research Area
ERAC	European Research Area and Innovation Committee
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Structural Funds
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
EU	European Union
FP	Framework Programme
GA	Grant Agreement
GE	Gender Equality
GEPs	Gender Equality Plans
GPC	High Level Group on Joint Programming
HE	Horizon Europe
ISAS	Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences
MICINN	Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación
MS	Member States
NHRF	National Hellenic Research Foundation
RFOs	Research Funding Organisations
RPOs	Research Performing Organisations
R&I	Research and Innovation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
SwafS	Science with and for Society
SWG GRI	Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation
SWG OSI	Standing Working Group on Open Science and Innovation
UGOT	University of Gothenburg
WP	Work Package

1. Providing policy advice from a European project

The aim of WP5 in the GENDERACTION project has been to provide strategic advice on gender equality policies in R&I. Particularly, WP5 purpose was to support the work of the SWG GRI and relevant EU and Member States stakeholders regarding the integration of gender in the implementation of Horizon 2020, as well as in the preparation of the next Framework Programme for R&I and the next European Structural Funds:

Objectives
Liaise with and support the SWG GRI on Gender in Research and Innovation
Liaise with relevant bodies and stakeholders responsible for ERA implementation to support the implementation of gender equality and gender mainstreaming
Provide strategic advice on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in H2020 and Framework Programme 9 and on European Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF) to the SWG GRI, and relevant EU and MS stakeholders
Provide strategic advice on gender in Open Innovation, Open Science, Open to the World to the SWG GRI, and relevant EU and MS stakeholders

Tasks
Task 5.1 Reporting to the SWG GRI on Gender in Research and Innovation (ISAS)
Task 5.2 Exploring the gender dimension of Open Science and Innovation policy (NHRF) ²
Task 5.3 Mapping and contacting other ERA relevant stakeholders involved in R&I policy at national and EU level (MICINN)
Task 5.4 Communication with other ERA relevant stakeholders (MICINN)
Task 5.5 Policy advice on Gender in European Funds for R&I (H2020 and FP9, as well as ERDF and ESF) (MICINN)
Task 5.6 Development of a systematic review, policy overview, and policy briefs on gender and SDGs, targeting ERA stakeholders and national RPOs and RFOs

At the time of finalizing our project, the team in charge of the WP5 has been able look back over the last four years and appreciate several outcomes of the activities so far as well as to reflect on how to provide policy advice on gender from a European project. WP5 experience may be useful for the sustainability of the GENDERACTION aims and for future EU projects.

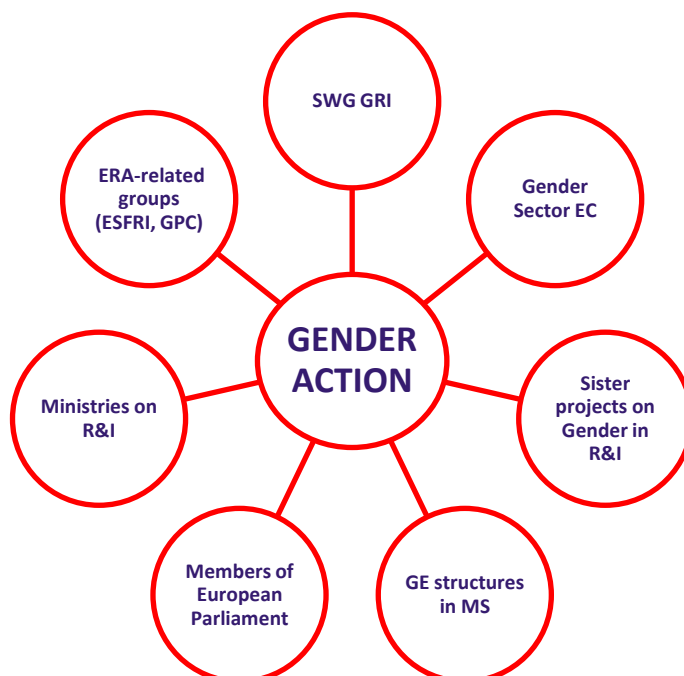
Influencing MS involved in GENDERACTION through provision of strategic policy advice constitutes a complex task, especially taking into account that GENDERACTION is a policy forum constituted by national representatives appointed by national authorities. Different factors have shaped our performance so far to address and influence the combination of objectives, decisions and actions that form the EU policy on R&I. First, regarding our capacity as actors to have an influence in the EU policy cycle, the main strength of GENDERACTION is to influence MS (including those ERA

² See D5.1. Report on “Strategic advice for enhancing the gender dimension of Open Science and Innovation policy”.

stakeholders and groups constituted by MS appointments) in a coordinated manner. Second, the political context is shaped by ups and downs in the support – at least at programmatic level - for gender equality and diversity at the EU and MS. Third, the positions of key actors around the EU R&I policy, their interests and resources they are able to mobilise, are political elements that are not under our control.

How has GENDERACTION proceeded under WP5? The normal flow of information and events has been as follows: 1- WP5 team/GENDERACTION coordinator receives information on topics, meetings, announcements, draft documents, etc. under discussion at EU institutions coming from the SWG GRI, EU institutions, gender networks, MS involved in the project, among others; 2- WP5 team reacts with statements, policy briefs, announcement of events, among others, that are distributed to the consortium and/or SWG GRI, gender networks, depending on the action. Normally this is an aftermath action (analysis of decisions made), and sometimes it is anticipatory (trying to influence a process of negotiation or a working document); 3- Members of the consortium share within their respective Ministries, members of the SWG GRI, permanent representations at the EU and networks, the information. In parallel, outside actors such as women's organizations and gender experts in R&I contribute to spread the word of the GENDERACTION message and create a public opinion within the R&I community aware of gender issues; 4- WP5 monitors the final decisions at EU level and assess to what extent GENDERACTION demands and recommendations have been considered.

WP5 constellation of actors that made our work possible:



When we enter as actors in a process of pushing for political change, there are several implicit starting ideas. We have identified the following assumptions and lesson learned in the approach to

the R&I political cycle of the EU that can be useful for the consortium and future projects with similar objectives:

Experience in lobbying for gender equality in R&I at national level is useful to lobby at EU level

Although this sentence is partly true, lobbying at national and EU level are very different scenarios that might require different skills, language, strategies, tools.... On the one hand, the content of the policy advice developed so far during the project has been enriched from previous background and expertise of the GENDERACTION community. Knowledge on the academic literature but also on the appropriate language to deal with policy-makers has been key to building messages under WP5. On the other hand, there was a lack of experience of the team with the particular policy cycle of the EU. For instance, inter-institutional negotiations for the FP9 proposal based on tripartite meetings (“trilogues”) between Parliament, the Council and the Commission have constituted a challenge to organize actions to influence in the process, whose agenda and discussions are not always accessible outside the EU.

The relation between GENDERACTION and the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI) also caused some confusion regarding WP5 tasks. The SWG GRI was established as of 1 July 2017. Given the change in the two groups and the bodies under which the groups fall, a clarification was requested by GENDERACTION from the ERAC Steering Board co-chaired by the Council and the Commission, related to potential cooperation of GENDERACTION with the SWG GRI. Both Council and Commission agreed, and a further legal check was carried out by the Council to confirm the framework of the cooperation.

Information flows smoothly from the EU institutions to the public

The institutional model of the EU is not always easy to understand for the general public, neither it is easy to access accurate and timely information on a particular topic from the different institutions, agencies, groups and stakeholders. The information on the FP9 negotiations, for instance, was scattered in different ERA-related groups, shadow committees, Government representatives, among others. Moreover, GENDERACTION could not participate as a project collectively in the public consultations launched by the EC as co-design approach, but had to do it individually and through direct inputs to the Gender Sector of the EC.

A journey map available for the research community and civil society organizations on the negotiation process of a Framework Programme would have been necessary to prepare in advance actions to influence in the policy cycle. Public consultations at some point in the design of a policy would not be enough for projects like GENDERACTION, whose aim is to mainstream gender in the R&I policy.

Timing of the EU policy would adapt to the requirements of the project

This is maybe the most unrealistic of the de facto assumptions that we made at the beginning of the project. The negotiation path of Horizon Europe and the European Structural Funds were not always predictable. Since June 2018, WP5 team adapted their timeline to the negotiation schedule of the

European Commission in order to increase their influence on the development of Horizon Europe and to facilitate the work of European stakeholders. Indeed, the intention of organising breakfast events for the Working Party for Research and for SwafS Programme Committee as stated in the project proposal was not possible in spite of attempts by the project coordinator at the beginning of 2019 during the Romanian Presidency. As a result, sometimes WP5 was not able to stimulate representatives of the different stakeholders included in the proposal as much as we would have liked.

Managing risks in policy advice is just a matter of dealing with politics and resistances

The world health crisis due to the covid-19 and the subsequent confinement in many countries revealed that some important risks related to health and travel issues were not foreseen neither by any EU funded project nor by European governments. After the first few months of the pandemic, European countries and granted projects had to assume that the pandemic would not go away in the immediate future. Limitations to organise face to face events and meetings had continued until 2021 and thus GENDERACTION postponed events became online events until the end of the project extension. The shift to online mutual learning and online lobby entailed new challenges for WP5 team.

Due to the path of negotiations at EU level for the 9th Framework Programme and the consequences of the covid-19 pandemic in terms of delays in the development of activities, the work of WP5 could not be completed as originally planned. This is the reason why a first preliminary report on “Mapping promising practices and policy advice on gender mainstreaming in European funds for research and innovation” was submitted in Month 42 that gave account for the work carried out during the negotiations for Horizon Europe. This complete version of the report includes WP5 work to promote gender in the ERDF/ES Funds as well as to explore the connections between UN SDGs and gender in the R&I field as a new task included during the period of project extension.

2. Strategic advice on gender in the R&I policy

Equipped with clear objectives in mind, a solid background on gender in R&I, as well as some challenges around how to lobby in the complex world of the EU, WP5 team has addressed during the lifetime of the project a significant number of EU institutions and stakeholders with the following broad lines of action:

Period	Target	Action	Tool	Objective/ Message
2018	SWG OSI – ERAC Group	Policy brief on the interlinks of gender and open science	Publication and dissemination of policy briefs	The gender dimension of Open Science and Open Innovation matters
2018	EC, EP, Council, Gender community	Launch a special series of policy briefs on Horizon Europe	Publication and dissemination of policy briefs	Influence the negotiations on the EC Proposal for the next Framework Program
2018-2019	Consortium members, RWP attachés	Follow-up of Horizon Europe negotiations and mobilizing partners	Development of notes and position papers on gender in HE regulation and rules for participation	Influence the negotiations on the EC Proposal for the next Framework Program
2019	ESFRI – ERAC Group	Contacts with ESFRI Spanish delegates and ESFRI Chair	Meetings and distribution of GENDERACTION materials	Use of the methodological framework to assess gender in international STI cooperation
2019	EC, RFOs	Policy brief of the role of funding agencies in gender in R&I	Publication and dissemination of policy briefs	Promote gender equality policies in RFO and EC research calls
2019	EC, Council, SWG GRI, Finnish Presidency	Position paper on the Future of GE in the ERA	Publication and dissemination of policy briefs	Maintain GE as one of the ERA priorities 2021-2027
2019	Finnish Presidency	Policy advice for the conference on “R&I Excellence through GE: New pathways and challenges - Helsinki call for action”	Review of working documents	Support GE as a priority of the new Presidency
2020	GPC – ERAC Group	Participation of WP5 leader in a GPC plenary meeting	Training session for decision-makers	Training on how to mainstream gender in partnerships
2020	Policy-makers	Policy brief on disruptive measures for gender equality in R&I	Publication and dissemination of policy briefs	Support the need for policy change to advance GE in R&I
2020-2021	Consortium members, RWP attachés	Follow-up of official documents on the new ERA and mobilizing partners	Distribution of suggestions from a gender perspective among partners	Effective coordination at GENDERACTION and SWG GRI levels can have an impact
2021	ITRE – EP	Policy brief on gender in partnerships	Meetings and distribution of	Influence the negotiations regarding partnerships at

			policy briefs	EP level
2021	EC, SWG GRI, policy- makers	Mutual Learning Workshop on Gender in the ERDF/ES Funds	Training session and distribution of policy briefs	Influence the new European Funds

We can conclude from the above lines of action that WP5 has concentrated on the priorities (Open Science and Open Innovation³) and agenda (FP9 negotiations) of the EC regarding R&I. Furthermore, the team has established communication with people in decision-making positions at ERA-related Groups, Ministries and the EC. The key tool WP5 has found to engage with different stakeholders across Europe were the policy briefs. This is the reason why the consortium decided to translate the most relevant policy briefs into different languages.

Through the publication of policy briefs, public organisations highlight a social problem and define strategic lines of action that aim to influence other institutions and governments. Position papers from very influential organisations have the capacity to legitimate demands, ideas and policy actions.

2.1. Influencing negotiations for Horizon Europe

In June 2018 the EC Proposal for the currently approved 9th Framework Programme was made available for the general public and GENDERACTION launched a special policy brief series dedicated to this topic.

GENDERACTION aimed to play an active role in the debates and negotiations around gender equality policies in the R&I field. With position papers the consortium has sent clear messages to the scientific community, research organisations and EU institutions in favour of gender equality policies. Moreover, the policy briefs have constituted an effort to: a) collect rigorous research results and studies; b) translate them into everyday language for the general public; and c) to address current problems by proposing the best solutions according to the experience in gender equality policies and the literature on gender and science. In this sense, GENDERACTION policy briefs have become simple but not simplistic pieces of relevant information for policy makers.

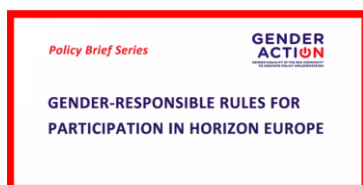
WP5 has produced eleven policy briefs related to Horizon Europe with the aim of influencing negotiations and mobilizing stakeholders. The issues addressed were influenced by the EC's calendar and the pace of work was set by the path of negotiations. This means that WP5 team adapted their timeline to the negotiation schedule of the EC in order to maximise impact and to facilitate the work of European stakeholders. Thus, these policy briefs were quite reactive and focused on the short-term.

The analysis of Horizon Europe from a gender perspective led to a wide range of recommendations to improve gender equality provisions in R&I programmes distributed in 8 key issues and their correspondent policy briefs: general advice on gender in FP9, global challenges in FP9, natural resources and industry, Horizon Europe Missions, Open Science & Open Innovation, International cooperation through Horizon Europe, Strengthening the ERA and Rules of procedure in Horizon Europe. Moreover, a policy was produced to influence the discussions on the future of gender equality as a continued priority in the new ERA.

³ See D5.1. Report on "Strategic advice for enhancing the gender dimension of Open Science and Innovation policy".

The policy brief series was complemented by two positions papers. The one released in August 2019 analysed the EC Orientations towards the first Strategic Plan implementing Horizon Europe bearing in mind the related online public consultation for Horizon Europe co-design 2021-2024, while the one released in October 2019 highlighted concrete gender provisions to be considered in the EC Orientations towards the Implementation Strategy of Horizon Europe web open consultation and in the related online public consultation for Horizon Europe Co-design – Implementation. The issues addressed included the work programme design, the submission and evaluation process, the Model Grant Agreement, Data and reporting, among others, being some of the most practical recommendations delivered by the project and that showed the ability GENDERACTION to go down to the ground when necessary.

<p>Policy Brief Series</p> <p>GENDER ACTION</p> <p>GENDER IN HORIZON EUROPE AN UNFINISHED BUSINESS</p>	<p>21 June 2018, Briefing paper n.1: Gender in Horizon Europe an unfinished business</p>
<p>Policy Brief Series</p> <p>GENDER ACTION</p> <p>GENDER AS A GLOBAL CHALLENGE AND KEY DRIVER FOR INNOVATION</p>	<p>25 June 2018, Briefing paper n.2: Gender as a global challenge and key driver for innovation.</p>
<p>Policy Brief Series</p> <p>GENDER ACTION</p> <p>THE ECONOMIC MODEL ENVISIONED BY HORIZON EUROPE A GENDER PERSPECTIVE TO NATURAL RESOURCES AND INDUSTRY</p>	<p>28 June 2018, Briefing paper n.3: The economic model envisioned by Horizon Europe</p>
<p>Policy Brief Series</p> <p>GENDER ACTION</p> <p>GENDER FOR HORIZON EUROPE RESEARCH & INNOVATION MISSIONS ENSURING A FAST-TRACK TO BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL</p>	<p>5 July 2018, Briefing paper n.4: Gender for Horizon Europe. Research & Innovation Missions</p>
<p>Policy Brief Series</p> <p>GENDER ACTION</p> <p>GENDER in OPEN SCIENCE & OPEN INNOVATION</p>	<p>10 July 2018, Briefing paper n.5: Gender in Open Science & Open Innovation</p>
<p>Policy Brief Series</p> <p>GENDER ACTION</p> <p>GENDER-RESPONSIVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR HORIZON EUROPE</p>	<p>17 July 2018, Briefing paper n.6: Gender-responsive international cooperation for Horizon Europe</p>
<p>Policy Brief Series</p> <p>GENDER ACTION</p> <p>STRENGTHENING GENDER IN THE ERA</p>	<p>23 July 2018, Briefing paper n.7: Strengthening gender in the ERA</p>



30 August 2018, Briefing paper n.8: [Gender-responsible rules for participation in Horizon Europe](#)



4 April 2019, Briefing paper n.11: [The future of Gender Equality in European R&I](#)



30 August 2019, [Position Paper on Gender in Horizon Europe Co-design](#)

2 October 2019, [Position Paper on Gender for the Implementation of Horizon Europe](#)

** Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these policy briefs are solely those of the project, not those of the European Commission.*

The publication of the eleven policy briefs during the negotiations towards Horizon Europe have contributed to achieve project objectives and impacts foreseen in the GA no. 741466 according to the following indicator: *Number of policy briefs.*

The policy brief series was an important boost for the activities of the project. Dissemination efforts were made by all the partners at national and European level, including translation efforts into national languages. All the partners involved in WP5 conducted an intense communication activity with the GENDERACTION consortium, sister projects, the SWG GRI and national research attachés at the Permanent representation in the EU, immediately after the edition of each policy brief. In parallel, each policy brief released was published on the GENDERACTION website and Twitter account. Moreover, the policy briefs and position papers were used to boost the calls for participation in Horizon Europe consultations and inspire those who were interested in supporting gender equality measures in the proposals. The joint efforts on dissemination of the policy brief series led to a significant impact on social media and researchers' networks:

- In June 2018 the media echoed the first policy brief of the Horizon Europe series and an interview with project coordinator was published in Research Europe in July. National research networks, such as the Spanish Association of Women Scientists and Technologists and the Italian "First", also echoed and disseminated the policy brief that opened the series among their associates.
- Different stakeholders subscribed to the GENDERACTION mailing list to receive the policy brief series and the project website experienced quite substantive increase of attendance in the days of releasing of papers. The GENDERACTION Twitter account and web analytics also showed a

significant impact thanks to the policy brief series. To give an example, in Twitter and Web statistics the launch of the policy briefs made a huge peak in impressions/page views.

Thus, the policy brief series launched by WP5 team contributed to the recognition acquired by GENDERACTION as a key actor on gender in European research policy. This is the reason why in July 2018 WP5 leader was invited to participate in the meeting on the “next Framework Programme” organized by former Spanish MEP at the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation and project coordinator was invited as speaker for the event “Women in Science. Recommendations to improve Horizon Europe through a gender perspective” organized in September 2018 by the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the EP (Brussels). The participation in these and other important meetings to provide an expert advice meant a high visibility for the project.

2.2. Long-term policy advice

Apart from the policy briefs aimed to influence the negotiations of Horizon Europe, WP5 has produced other policy briefs that were more reflective and strategic on the long run, such as the ones on RFOs and on disruptive measures for gender equality in R&I. These outcomes have enabled the project to address different issues and target audiences as well as to practice a different approach in the development of ideas, enabling thorough discussions among partners.

The policy brief on “The role of Funding Agencies in the promotion of GE in R&I” was released on the 8th of March 2019 to commemorate the international women’s day. Taking advantage of the resolutions of different European institutions that urged RFOs to adopt gender equality policies and to review their procedure and practices. Concretely, GENDERACTION called on RFOs to address the distribution of resources in R&I systems, the scientific evaluation of proposals, and the monitoring of funded projects taking into account gender bias and the gender dimension in research and innovation content. Promising practices introduced by well-known RFOs such as the Irish Research Council, the Swedish Research Council and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research were highlighted with the double objective of supporting the actions of these RFOs and promoting contagion effects in other RFOs. This policy brief was among the most translated policy briefs into different languages based on partners’ preferences about what they considered most useful at the national level.

The need for disruptive measures in the field of gender equality in R&I came up in one of the Executive Board meetings when the partners reflected on the slow pace of change in spite of efforts at EU level and the difficulties that many countries are facing to adopt positive action measures able to accelerate change. WP5 team left this meeting with the task of drafting a policy brief on disruptive measures for gender equality. We used the term “disruption” in the field of gender equality policies to refer to measures that have the potential to produce significant and bold changes in the status quo in the short to medium term and with possible impact on the improvement of the working conditions of underrepresented groups in R&I (due to multiple discrimination). Thus, we differentiated two forms of disruptive measures: temporary special measures addressing gender imbalances and ambitious

measures addressing structures, and we provided a conceptual framework and arguments for both of them. This policy brief presented also inspiring examples at policy, RFO and RPO levels.



8 March 2019, Briefing paper n.10: [The role of Funding Agencies in the promotion of GE in R&I](#)



14 May 2020, [Briefing paper n.14: Disruptive Measures for GE in R&I](#)

The publication of these two policy briefs on RFOs and disruptive measures have contributed to achieve project objectives and impacts foreseen in the GA no. 741466 according to the following indicator: *Number of policy briefs*.

2.3. Liaison with MS and other ERA stakeholders

GENDERACTION has liaised with a wide array of ERA **stakeholders** in order to contribute to create an ERA community to innovate policy implementation before and after our work on the negotiations towards Horizon Europe. To give three examples: contacts were established with ESFRI Spanish delegates and ESFRI Chair during May-September 2019 with the aim of mainstreaming gender in research infrastructures activities; communication with Spanish representatives in Horizon Europe negotiations on partnerships led to the participation of WP5 leader in the GPC plenary in September 2019 with a talk on how to mainstream gender in partnerships; and liaison was offered since July 2019 to the Finnish Presidency for the October 2019 Conference on “Research and Innovation Excellence through gender equality: New pathways and challenges – Helsinki call for action”.

Moreover, WP5 team has been involved in the discussions of different relevant **documents** for the R&I policy in Europe trying to have an influence by providing feedback, suggesting comments and advice on:

- Questionnaire on the Future of ERA launched by the ERAC Ad-hoc Working Group on the Future of the ERA in June 2019. GENDERACTION supported that gender continues to be a priority in the future.
- Draft of the Council Conclusions on the new ERA issued in December 2020 in order to support SWG GRI and GENDERACTION members in the common goal of strengthening the 2015 Council Conclusions on gender equality in the ERA. GENDERACTION supported the specific paragraph on gender issues.
- Draft Council Conclusions on Deepening the European Research Area: Providing researchers with attractive and sustainable careers and working conditions and making brain

circulation a reality in April 2021. GENDERACTION included suggestions regarding female young researchers, international mobility and work-life balance.

WP5 has also supported policy coordination by actively engaging national representatives from EU Member States and Associated Countries involved in the **consortium** and the SWG GRI. This has been pursued through virtual communications taking advantage of the sense of gender community and trust created by GENDERACTION. In particular, WP5 team has kept GENDERACTION partners updated on gender issues in Horizon Europe negotiations with different reports distributed among partners, especially on gender in the two partial agreements reached as a result of the trilogue negotiations: the GENDERACTION brief note on gender in the Council Conclusions on ERA governance and the Council Partial General Approach on the Regulation for Horizon Europe (December 2019), as well the follow-up on gender issues in Horizon Europe regulation and in the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe.

It is worth to mention that WP5 leader has closely followed-up negotiations on Horizon Europe in contact with Spanish attachés at the RWP, and Spanish colleagues involved in negotiations on Horizon Europe partnerships areas. Particularly, WP5 leader led the promotion of a new broad line on gender research and now this new broad line is part of the Horizon Europe strategic programme in Cluster 2. Additionally, with the aim of ensuring both gender balance and gender perspective in the upcoming design of missions in Horizon Europe, WP5 disseminated information on the open call for members of the expert board on missions during May 2019. Finally, following the preparations for the joint GENDERACTION and SI PRES conference, the team worked closely with representatives of current and upcoming presidency trios on the drafting of the Ljubljana Declaration on advancing gender equality in research. EU Member States will be asked by SI PRES to sign the declaration in September 2021.

The results of this lobbying work that addressed national authorities with the aim of influencing the national position in the EU institutions was assessed in the executive boards held during the lifetime of the project.

The contacts established among MS, AC, SWGRI, EC and stakeholders have contributed to achieve project objectives and impacts foreseen in the GA no. 741466 according to the following indicators: *Number of policy communications*.

2.4. Introducing gender in Missions and European Partnerships

In August 2019 the WP5 team established contact with 75 Horizon Europe Mission Board members responsible for drafting the thematic priority areas of the next framework program. They were provided with the policy brief 4 on Missions⁴ and offered a meeting during Research and Innovation Days in Brussel's in September 2019. Although in the end no meeting took place for capacity restriction both at the side of the mission board members and the R&I days event, many of mission board members answered that they welcome the information from GENDERACTION. In June 2020

⁴ https://genderaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/GENDERACTION_Policy-Brief_4.pdf.

the WP5 team re-established contact with mission board members, informed them about gender dimension in research and asked them about their opinion on this issue and the status of implementation of gender equality measures and perspectives in the work of their mission board. Again, those mission board members who replied stated that they will take this issue into account. One of the mission board members initiated a call with the WP5 team to debate in more detail about implementation of this approach and during the call expressed an interest of having short document tailored on each mission that would describe specifically what gender in this topic contains. The GENDERACTION team then created 5 papers on gender in each mission (two of them in cooperation with H2020 sister project)⁵ and distributed them to mission board members during September 2020. All papers included information about what sex and gender means and specific examples of how sex and gender interacts in particular mission. At the end of the document, recommendations were made. Again, this support was very welcomed and in a good timing, since the work on mission board content was in its final phase. Papers on mission were also very helpful in Horizon Europe Public Consultations that took place in September and in whose involvement GENDERACTION successfully invited stakeholders and individuals (via Twitter, Website & email dissemination). The materials were also used as at the national level by members of the ministerial shadow committees on Horizon Europe.⁶



Mission Board for Cancer: [What gender dimension means and why it is important for cancer R&I?](#)

Mission Board for Cities: [What gender dimension means and why it is important for the future of our cities?](#)

Mission Board for Oceans: [What gender dimension means and why it is important for healthy waters R&I?](#)

Mission Board for Soil: [What gender dimension means and why it is important for soils' health?](#)

⁵ <https://genderaction.eu/horizon-europe/>, paper on Soil was created in cooperation with Gender-SMART, paper on Oceans with BalticGender project.

⁶ Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.



Mission Board for Climate Change: [What gender dimension means and why it is important for climate change?](#)

Regarding Partnerships, once the I Strategic Plan 2021-2024 of Horizon Europe was launched, the WP5 team decided to focus on the European Parliament discussions regarding the new Framework Programme. Given upcoming debates on European partnerships in the ITRE committee, WP5 team produced a policy brief on **“How to promote gender in European Partnerships”** with the target of reaching the discussions at the EP level and supporting members of the ITRE Committee in its commitment to promote gender equality in R&I. The policy brief highlighted the uneven status of gender issues in H2020 Co-fund initiatives with some initiative having addressed gender issues while others have taken into account neither gender balance nor sex/gender analysis in their joint activities. Thus, the policy brief included different recommendations at the Governance level of Partnerships – mentioning the EC, the GPC and ERA-LEARN - and at co-funded projects level, such as encouraging women to apply, reinforcing sex/gender analysis in the research topics, gender balance in the evaluation panels, reviewing award criteria from a gender perspective, including gender indicators in the monitoring of research projects, among others. GENDERACTION called the ITRE Committee to take the opportunity to influence the design of the new partnerships by stressing the message of gender equality in the dialogues with the European Commission.

One of the most important outcomes of this initiative was the meeting held the 23rd of April with one MEP interested in knowing more about GENDERACTION recommendations. This policy communication was the result of dissemination efforts among ITRE and FEMM members. The contact with a MEP and further advice provided by WP5 team contributed to reinforce gender issues in different ITRE documents related to Partnerships.⁷ To give just two examples: the DRAFT REPORT on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe includes six amendments proposed by ITRE mentioning gender balance and the gender dimension in R&I;⁸ and gender balanced representation has been included in the composition of the steering committee as one of the amendments proposed by ITRE to the DRAFT REPORT on the proposal for a decision of the EP and of the Council on the participation of the Union in the European Partnership on Metrology jointly undertaken by several MS.⁹

The GENDERACTION policy brief on European partnerships was disseminated among relevant R&I stakeholders across Europe through the newsletter of the knowledge-sharing platform “ERA Portal” Austria in June 2021.¹⁰ This widely dissemination of a WP5 outcome has been possible thanks to the good reputation of the project in the production of rigorous content on gender equality policies. To give another example, the GENDERNET Plus consortium – as a sister ERANET-Cofund - has

⁷ See ITRE newsletter, ISSUE 15/2021 of 15 July 2021.

⁸ See European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (2021). DRAFT REPORT on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe. 2021/0048(NLE).

⁹ See European Parliament, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (2021). DRAFT REPORT on the proposal for a decision of the EP and of the Council on the participation of the Union in the European Partnership on Metrology jointly undertaken by several MS. 2021/0049(COD).

¹⁰ <https://era.gv.at/news-items/genderaction-policy-brief-focuses-on-european-partnerships/>

disseminated this policy brief stating to be “*proud to be cited by GENDERACTION as a model for the implementation of co-funding and equality monitoring of funded projects in its Policy Brief n°16*”.¹¹

This lobbying activity and mission board papers are a result of the EU impact plan that contains checking for windows of opportunities as well as an example of mutual cooperation between WP7 & WP5.



April 2021, Policy Brief No. 16: [How to promote gender in partnerships](#)

The publication of papers on Missions and the policy brief European Partnerships and the consequent meetings with a MEP and Mission Board members have contributed to achieve project objectives and impacts foreseen in the GA no. 741466 according to the following indicators: *Number of policy communications* and *Number of policy briefs*.

2.5. Issuing high-impact recommendations

The communication strategy followed to disseminate the policy briefs consisted of reaching directly relevant stakeholders already collected and contacted under Task 5.3 “Mapping and contacting other ERA relevant stakeholders involved in R&I policy at national and EU level”. Thanks to this task, GENDERACTION was ready to disseminate relevant information on gender in R&I policy to a wide range of stakeholders, including National Contact Points, NCP network project coordinators, representatives of EP Groups, representatives of ERA Stakeholder Platform, H2020 sister projects on gender & science, and other relevant gender stakeholders and SwafS advisors. In parallel, with the aim to reach the research community and gender stakeholders, each policy brief was published on the GENDERACTION website and Twitter account. All the partners in GENDERACTION have contributed to the distribution of policy briefs and position papers on Horizon Europe at national level. To give an example, WP5 leader disseminated the Policy Brief Series among the Spanish network of European projects on gender & science that joins around 20 Spanish research institutions. Indeed, since the Women and Science Unit is part of the Cabinet of the Minister on Science and Innovation, there is a continuous reporting on the achievements of the project at Ministerial level.

More than fifty concrete recommendations can be found in WP5 policy briefs. A selection of some of those recommendations can be classified in terms of the EC gender equality priorities, as follows:

¹¹ <http://gender-net-plus.eu/category/newsevents/> Posted on July, 15 2021.

EC priority	Recommendation	Target
Gender equality in R&I careers	To maintain a specific funding line for Gender equality issues in “Strengthening the European Research Area” Pillar	EC- Horizon Europe
	To mainstream gender in the process of proposal evaluation and funding decisions	RFOs
	To design effective work-life balance measures to be applied in Horizon Europe projects in consultation with gender stakeholders	RPOs; funded projects
	To develop Temporary Special Measures (positive action) in the Rules for Participation in order to promote women’s participation in Horizon Europe projects	EC – Horizon Europe
	To include an obligation for partner institutions to guarantee equal pay in the proposals submitted for funding	RFOs; RPOs
	To address ambitious measures that address formal and informal structures of research institutions in a way that power relations are changed substantially	RPOs
	Members States should join the Commission and incentivise the unique role of women as social innovators and entrepreneurs	MS; Innovation Sector
	Research calls of joint initiatives should encourage women to apply	EC; RFOs
Gender balance in decision making	To guarantee the participation of women and gender equality stakeholders in the consultations with the civil society to define the Horizon Europe “Missions”	EC- Horizon Europe
	To ensure gender balance in decision-making in international agreements, programmes and calls	EC; MS
	Temporary special measures aiming at correcting gender imbalances such as women’s underrepresentation among research staff but especially in decision-making and leadership positions	MS; RPOs
	Gender balance in evaluation panels of joint transnational calls	EC; RFOs
Integration of the gender dimension into the content of R&I	To integrate the sex/gender analysis in data management and data applications	EC – Horizon Europe
	To require the integration of sex/gender analysis where appropriate in international agreements, programmes and calls	EC – Horizon Europe; RFOs
	To consider training on the integration of gender analysis into research and innovation could be considered as an eligible cost	EC; RFOs
	To avoid the reproduction of gender bias and gender stereotypes in the design of robotics, artificial intelligence and ICT technologies	Research community
	To highlight gender factors involved as cross-cutting issues for better solutions in the food and natural resources SDGs	Research community

With regard to key messages that GENDERACTION has tried to highlight in the policy briefs, there is a central issue behind all of them: gender equality and the gender perspective in R&I is a matter of quality, excellence and human rights over the economic argument that links more women in research to economic benefits and growth. This is why the key messages always refer to ethical issues, common world values, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, among others:

Horizon Europe should not lose this momentum to advance gender equality in order to make R&I investments shape a more inclusive future based on better science and innovation

Gender Equality, as SDG5, requires a specific intervention area [in HE]

To accelerate progress and to transform systems towards SDGs in a responsible and efficient way, the EU R&I upcoming missions need to appropriately integrate the gender dimension and ensure gender balance in mission development

It is crucial to mainstream gender in the STI International Cooperation model of Horizon Europe to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (including SDG 5). This will help in the advancement of the EU R&I capacities but also in the attainment of political, social, economic and humanitarian commitments.

Challenges in Strengthening the ERA

Centres of excellence of the future

Horizontal structures

Collaborative leadership

Gender balance in decision-making

Staff participation in design, implementation and evaluation of R&I policies

Zero sexual harassment and sexist behaviour

Non-discrimination based on gender, race, social class, ability...

Care facilities and politics of time

Reasonable mobility

Professional gender equality structures and policies

Diversity of career paths: career break opportunities

In this sense, the WP5 team has tried to give the project a long-range view. We have addressed immediate issues on the feminist agenda and proposed the adoption of temporary special measures to accelerate change. However, at the same time, it was crucial to remain critical with different aspects of the R&I system and made some bold proposals to address it. Consider, for instance, the idea of defining some elements of the “research centres of the future” that should be directed towards horizontal structures and the balanced and democratic participation of the research community in the design of policies. Indeed, GENDERACTION has also encouraged the EC and research funders to review the three Horizon Europe award criteria from a gender perspective:

- Excellent science avoids any bias in the content of research and produces results that benefit the whole society. Thus, gender and diversity perspectives in the content of research could be listed among the assessment criteria for scientific quality.

- Research impacts include socio-economic impact as well as the transfer and communication of results to society at large, taking into account women’s and men’s needs. Gender-sensitive communication, including gender balance in communication and dissemination actions and inclusive language, should be encouraged in funded projects.

- Quality of the implementation refers also to fair allocation of resources, tasks, positions, and visibility. To give just two examples: gender balance in the leadership of research teams and in the authorship of academic papers.

WP5 policy briefs are imbued of these ideals because we think the feminist advocacy in R&I also needs “disruptive” ideas as well as the European Commission policy itself would be enriched by *thinking outside the box*.

Finally, using policy briefs as the main tool to provide policy advice has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the message of GENDERACTION has been made explicit for the

general public and will remain so over time. Gender experts and feminists in public research institutions can continue using these messages and recommendations to support their actions, especially if they can use them in local languages, and this leads to sustainability beyond the life of the project. On the other hand, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the influence at MS level and also account for the impact of the messages included in a policy brief. Other forms of influencing politics such as participating in meetings, events, press release, etc. may be more attractive and dynamic for the general public and for policy-makers.

For now, there is some evidence of the impact of policy briefs, such as: an invited talk to GENDERACTION coordinator at the European Parliament to discuss gender issues in Horizon Europe (September 2018); the participation of GENDERACTION in the Conference on “Research and Innovation Excellence through gender equality: New pathways and challenges - Helsinki call for action” (November 2019) as one of the main actors involved in the EU R&I policy; positive reactions on the recommendations by feminist scholars; and two main tangible results:

- The recognition from the European Commission to GENDERACTION and its policy briefs as one of the most important contributions to gender equality in Horizon 2020. The policy brief stressed by the EC was the one on “Strengthening the ERA”, produced by WP5 team.

A significant contribution to Gender Equality policies at the national level stems from GENDERACTION's series of position papers and policy briefings with an emphasis on networking and community building. Notably, GENDERACTION, flagged as a success story by the Commission, recommended in its policy brief to properly integrate gender equality policies in the ‘Strengthening the ERA’ part of the proposal for Horizon Europe and in the future of the ERA.¹²

- The inclusion of a new broad line on gender research as part of the Horizon Europe strategic programme in Cluster 2, according to the partial agreement reached in April 2019 by the EU Council and the Parliament. This line of action was promoted by WP5 in the position papers produced to influence the FP9 negotiations.

¹² European Commission (2020). *Gender equality. Achievements in Horizon 2020 and recommendations on the way forward*. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/8cf2353d-cbc9-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1>

3. Mainstreaming gender in the ERDF/ES Funds

On 12 May 2021, MICINN organised the GENDERACTION Mutual Learning Workshop¹³ on Gender in the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The aim was to provide an opportunity to the GENDERACTION partners and members of the SWG GRI to learn about how these funds contribute to promoting gender equality in R&I. It was held online, bringing together experts from different public administrations from several EU-Member States, as well as key stakeholders involved in the programming and management of these structural funds. The moment of organising this MLW was crucial as MS and regions are programming the new Funds (formerly known as European Structural and Investment Funds –ESIF–) to be implemented in the period 2021-2027 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.

After the welcoming speech by Teresa Riesgo Alcaide, Secretary-General for Innovation (Spain) and Marcela Linkova, GENDERACTION Coordinator and SWG GRI Chair, a session was dedicated to the introduction to the ESF/ERDF funds and its connection with R&I. As pointed out by Silvia Alvarez, Programme Manager at the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, in the ERDF¹⁴ there is an expected budget concentration on Policy Objectives related to **innovation actions**.

The introductory session was followed by Helena Morais (Gender Mainstreaming Researcher at the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)), who presented a report¹⁵ about **gender equality in 2014-2020 ESIF programmes**. Results showed that gender mainstreaming and references were often presented in the chapter on «horizontal themes» but had very little impact on the content of specific programmes. This was translated into a lack of gender-sensitive targets and gender indicators (only compulsory for ESF). Comparing with the financial allocations in previous programming periods, the dual approach¹⁶ was disappearing. Estimations pointed out that only approximately 0,6% of ERDF and 5,3% of ESF budgets were earmarked for gender equality measures (1% of all ESIF).

Another recent study¹⁷ among national and regional RFOs of Spain, presented by Maribel Castellvi (Women's Institute) during the MLW, analysed the status of gender mainstreaming in structural funds. According to results, the growing importance of having sex-disaggregated data per amount of the grants is noteworthy, although only half of the organisations have this information disaggregated per number of requested and awarded projects. The most relevant result is that almost all agencies have the **intention to integrate the gender perspective in the programming of the ESF+ and ERDF 2021-2027**, even though few have previous experience in such integration.

¹³ To watch the recorded workshop and access to the programme and all presentations by the speakers, please visit: <https://genderaction.eu/mlw-on-ge-in-esf-erdf-funds/>

¹⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1058>

¹⁵ *Gender budgeting. Mainstreaming gender into the EU budget and macroeconomic policy framework*, European Institute for Gender Equality (2018).

¹⁶ «Complementarity between gender mainstreaming and specific gender equality policies and measures, including positive measures» (EIGE's Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus).

¹⁷ The study was launched together by the Women and Science Unit (MICINN), the Network on Equality Policies between Women and Men in the Community Funds and R&I Policy Network in the framework of this GENDERACTION workshop.

Different experiences presented during the MLW illustrate how gender can be mainstreamed in structural funds. For example, the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy) will integrate gender in ERDF programming thanks to the approval of its first Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in the framework of the Horizon 2020 [SUPERA project](#), which also brought the inclusion of gender equality principles in the Regional Development Plan (the core document at regional level). The last fosters the implementation of positive actions aimed at ensuring compliance with gender equality in all regional actions, including R&I financed by the ERDF. Alliances with stakeholders and citizens were key to develop the GEP and the new programme through a bottom-up approach, as explained by Antonio Mura. Consequently, equal opportunities will be a cross-cutting principle of each Policy Objective of the new ERDF programme in Sardinia.

MICINN has elaborated a **Policy Brief** as a result of this workshop. It raises awareness about the need of mainstreaming gender at the **programmatic level in the core documents** because the lack of specific requirements in the 2014-2020 period led to gender-blind funding. Equality between men and women, gender mainstreaming and the integration of a gender perspective in all phases of programming, development and implementation is one of the four Horizontal Principles included in the new Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) of these Funds¹⁸. Still, compared with the previous regulation, **gender equality has been merged with other grounds of discrimination** as part of the same Article 9, losing its prominence as a single article. Moreover, it has not been transferred to any of the five Policy Objectives of these Funds.

A key challenge for gender equality is that, at the programmatic level, gender mainstreaming is not a requirement when developing the Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), in which the ERDF programming is based. This lack of gender-sensitive targets can result in the absence of gender budgeting. Indeed, the **inclusiveness of labour markets** and the **equal access to education and training** (Policy Objective 4) are apparently the only specific objectives of the ERDF where **gender equality measures** could be relevant (although not explicit). Furthermore, while the development of **horizontal skills in R&I** is covered by the **ESF+** (e.g. training of researchers), the ERDF addresses only the development of concrete skills linked to the S3, for example, new skills for innovation, with no reference to gender-specific targets. As a result, this can lead to ignoring gender disparities in R&I, instead of investing new funds to fill the already existing gender gaps and the new challenges, also in terms of gender equality, caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

On the opposite, it is established that the **ESF+ specifically contributes to the Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**, among others. Article 6 of its Regulation¹⁹ addresses «conciliation between working and personal life, combat the feminisation of poverty and gender discrimination in the labour market and in education and training». However, the foreseen actions are directed only at establishing a **gender-balanced**

¹⁸ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1060>

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021R1057>

labour market, with no other gender mainstreaming measures. ESF+ programming should be more ambitious, integrating gender through all the planned interventions and phases.

Finally, according to the CPR, the Funds should include **measurable indicators** to enable the monitoring of support of gender equality. Nevertheless, only the ESF+ foresees that common indicators related to personal data should be broken down by gender (women, men and non-binary persons). On the other side, only one result indicator of the ERDF related to Interreg refers to «participations in joint actions promoting gender equality, equal opportunities and social inclusion». Gender impact indicators are key for monitoring the effectiveness of gender mainstreamed programming and should be included in all types of actions, for example, in the investment in infrastructure or training. Defining sex-disaggregated indicators in S3 and new operational programmes is paramount to ensure correct monitoring. These indicators will ultimately enable monitoring the support to gender equality in the ERA (which comprises budget allocations too).

The new programming period brings a window of opportunity for including specific targets addressing gender inequalities according to regional needs, which starts with planning S3 with a gender perspective. GENDERACTION endorses Helena Morais's statement that **all Policy Objectives are impacted by gender**, but managing authorities need specific instruments and resources to plan the allocation of funding with a dual approach, this is, combining gender mainstreaming with specific gender equality measures and targets. The same applies to gender equality bodies that support other institutions in their work. Joint collaboration mechanisms should be put into practice to properly accompany these processes, including the re-activation of networks such as communities of practice. For example, the Network on Equality Policies between Women and Men in the Community Funds in Spain fosters a real and effective implementation of gender equality, not only by promoting its mainstreaming in all the fields of action of structural funds, but also by programming specific actions aimed at combating gender discrimination and achieving real gender equality.

Finally, to support gender mainstreaming into the new European funds, GENDERACTION strongly advises the use of EIGE's **Gender Budgeting step-by-step toolkit**²⁰, which includes 11 practical tools and MS good practices and examples following the entire funding cycle (available in several languages). The Tool 6 is focused on developing quantitative and qualitative indicators for advancing gender equality, expanding already defined common gender indicators.



17 August 2021, [Policy Brief No. 17: Gender mainstreaming in ESF and ERDF](#)

The organization of the MLW on gender in the ERDF/ES Funds and the publication of the resulting policy brief have contributed to achieve project objectives and impacts foreseen in the GA no. 741466 according to the following indicators: *Number of mutual learning workshops and Number of policy briefs.*

²⁰ *Gender Budgeting: Step-by-step toolkit. Guidance for mainstreaming gender into the EU Funds*, European Institute for Gender Equality (2020): <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-budgeting>

4. Policy Benchmark on SDGs and gender

During January-September 2021, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, University of Gothenburg (UGOT), carried out work dedicated to the enhancement of knowledge and understanding on gender and 2030 Agenda/SDGs for policy development in European Funds for R&I. The task has focused on mapping and disseminating research results, as well as benchmarking policy developments, resulting in a systematic research review, a policy benchmark report and a series of five policy briefs on gender and SDGs, targeting ERA stakeholders and national RPOs and RFOs. The work has been carried out in collaboration with work package leader MICINN, and has benefited from experiences from GENDERACTION sister project GenderNet Plus, as a best practice on how to include SDGs and the gender dimension in research calls and co-funded projects.

The research review report, *Gender and Sustainability: An International Research Review*, is an analysis of peer reviewed articles on sustainability and gender published in international journals in the period of 2015-2021. Derived from the content of the material, i.e., the identified research publications, but also with regard to policy development in relation to the funding of research that address sustainability and gender, the analysis focus on four themes:

- 1) Knowledge Production, Measurements and Indicators;
- 2) Implementation and Civil Society;
- 3) Regulated and Reproductive Work; and
- 4) Ecosystems and Economic Growth.

It identifies research gaps as well as methodological and epistemological perspectives with potential for improvement through efforts by European Funds for R&I and RFOs in EU member states, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of R&I to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. Among the most important recommendations are:

- efforts to promote interdisciplinary research collaborations focusing on how the three pillars of sustainability – social, economic and ecological – influence each other;
- the importance of intersectional analyses for achieving more knowledge on the social dimension of sustainability that goes beyond the use of sex-disaggregated data; and
- the involvement of civil society and other actors not traditionally involved in knowledge production.

The policy benchmark report demonstrates that gender equality and the gender dimension of sustainability is not sufficiently reflected on in R&I policy documents in the EU. Through an investigation of three cases of best practice – *Gendered Innovations 2*, *GenderNet Plus* and *the SDG Synergies Approach* – the report provides recommendations on how forthcoming HE work packages and the next strategic plan can ensure that the objectives of sustainability and gender do not function as competing goals but, on the contrary, can create synergies for increased scientific quality and social impact. Among the recommendations, the report emphasizes

- the importance of recognizing how sustainable conditions for researchers/teachers and students are linked to how knowledge production can contribute to the transition to a sustainable world;
- that calls promoting the development of gender knowledge on SDGs should encourage analysis of interactions between targets; and

- that the assessment of SDG Relevance should be integrated in the evaluation of applications.



August 2021, Position Paper No 3: [Policy Benchmark on Sustainability and Gender](#)

The five policy briefs are based on the six clusters of HE pillar II, mapping recent research on gender and SDGs in order to identify potential areas where forthcoming work programmes and calls can be targeted so that the SDGs and their gender dimension can be included as a cross-cutting issue of all clusters and areas of intervention, as recommended.

Results will be delivered to the SWG GRI and will be presented to the SwafS Programme Committee representatives at the national level. These results can be further used by the SWG GRI and other stakeholders to be presented to the European Parliament and at public consultations from the EC.

The publication of position papers and policy briefs on the interlinks between SDGs, gender and the R&I production and policy have contributed to achieve project objectives and impacts foreseen in the GA no. 741466 according to the following indicators: *Number of policy briefs*.

5. Conclusions: lessons learnt and future developments

All the efforts undertaken in WP5 to provide policy advice and being strategic regarding the R&I policy have paid off. GENDERACTION has been able to support and empower the SWG GRI in their work and has been able to ascertain important steps to reinforce gender in the recently started Framework Programme Horizon Europe, such as the requirement of GEPs as an eligibility criterion for beneficiaries and the inclusion of the gender dimension in the content of research proposals by default. As stated by Jean Eric Paquet in GENDERACTION Final Conference, “gender equality continues to be a priority in the R&I policy and in the future of the ERA”.

Moreover, some of the concepts used in different materials produced and disseminated by WP5 are now well-established characteristics of the EU framework of gender equality policies in R&I. For instance, the need to bring the private sector on board, the intersectional perspective that accounts for other variables apart from gender and the participatory approach in gender equality policies have been mentioned since the beginning of the project and its strategic policy advice. The demand to put an end to sexual harassment and to challenge the hierarchical structures in R&I that allow abuses were also foreseen by the project as key tasks of the excellent research centres of the future and is now one of the priorities of the EC.

However, other priority issues are not yet fully integrated in the EU framework for gender equality in R&I. For instance, the use of temporary special measures in the near future of MS and AC to speed up change towards gender equality is still uncertain. To what extent Horizon Europe beneficiaries are equipped with strong gender equality structures and capacity-building to work on inclusive and participatory gender equality plans that aim at institutional change is also one of the GENDERACTION concerns when the end of the project arrives. Indeed, there is still a gap between more and less experienced countries in gender equality in R&I. Future initiatives to streamline coordination policy towards gender equality in the ERA would need to address these issues in order to give continuity to the actions undertaken by this project.

We have been successful in mobilizing partners, addressing key stakeholders, spreading the word of GENDERACTION especially in Widening countries through instruments and tactics such as mutual learning, policy brief series and policy communications. All of them can be considered promising practices on gender mainstreaming in European Funds for research and innovation. Moreover, along the way we have learnt several lessons that may be useful for future actions related to policy coordination to advance the implementation of gender equality and inclusiveness objectives in the ERA as well as among MS:

- Effective and smooth coordination among MS requires common understandings on gender equality concepts as well as well-established and connected gender equality structures in R&I. The reaction capacity depends on it.
- Strategic policy advice needs to be tailored to the target audience. Indeed, the strategy and tactic to be used will depend on the topic to be addressed, the requirements of potential negotiations and even the conditions due to global health emergencies. Granted projects like GENDERACTION need to have this flexibility to be effective in creating a policy community.
- The work of disseminating ideas in line with human rights and SDGs is never in vain, although it is not always easy to appreciate the results in the short term and to trace their concrete impact. We are convinced that without initiatives like GENDERACTION the story of

how Horizon Europe became another milestone for gender equality policies in the European Research Area would have been very different.