

## *Addressing the complexity of gender equality in research and innovation in current Europe*

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To develop a vision for the future of gender equality in European research and innovation, we need to better address the complexity of gender equality. In this talk I will highlight three main dimensions of this complexity. The first one has to do with intersectionality, the phenomenon that different social and political inequalities are not separate and independent from each other, but strongly, and contextually interwoven. This implies that we cannot 'isolate' gender if we try to advance gender equality, and this implication is only rarely addressed and in dire need of more and better attention. Gender equality always de facto is gender+ equality.

The second dimension of complexity has to do with the dynamic nature of gender relations and the need to better consider how interventions aiming at change towards gender+ equality can be initiated and how these interventions can be effective. Given that interventions towards more gender+ equality in research are often a form of gender mainstreaming (that is: they require the effective engagement of mainstream non-gender equality actors), this means a need to develop theoretical ideas on how to create and sustain effective alliances with these mainstream others. We have new theory and empirical research to use here, especially social complexity theory.

Last but not least, the complexity of interventions to advance gender+ equality is rooted in their embeddedness in a fast-changing Europe. Not only is inequality on the rise in terms of economic resources, there is also a growing support among some stakeholders or political actors for explicit inequality and exclusion. Gender+ equality is often explicitly targeted by these actors, and there is thus a rather urgent need to develop better strategies for addressing opposition to gender+ equality and for making progress under these new conditions.