Gender and Science Policy Briefs: From "Where to start" to "How to innovate": An Introduction
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This policy brief series is geared to national level policy makers and institutional science leaders in research performing organisations (RPOs) and research funding organisations (RFOs). It consists of twenty-six policy briefs.

Twenty of these policy briefs are grouped around five themes: 1) Recruitment and Promotion, 2) Gender Equality Plans, 3) Gender Dimension in Research Content in Research Performing Organisations (RPOs), 4) Gender Dimension in Research Content in Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) and 5) Gender Balance in Decision-Making. Given the variety of policy agendas and implementation levels across European countries, each topic is furthermore subdivided into four briefs, targeting these different national policy levels.

Furthermore, six individual policy briefs focus on: 1) tackling sexual harassment, 2) intersectionality, 3) securing top-level support for gender equality, 4) building gender competence and knowledge 5) statistics and methodology and 6) implementation and resistance. These six policy briefs are not targeted at a specific country group.

The European Research Area (ERA) is at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy and its Innovation Union (IU) policy flagship.[1] One of the five ERA priorities is gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research.[2] The 2012 ERA Communication invites Member States to create a legal and policy environment conducive to gender equality and mainstreaming through:

- removing barriers including legal barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers
- addressing gender imbalances in decision making processes
- strengthening the gender dimension in research programmes[3]

It also invites member states to foster partnerships with research funders, research organisations and universities in order to push for institutional and cultural change on gender through charters, performance agreements and awards whilst ensuring that at least 40% of the under-represented sex participate in committees.[4]

Research stakeholder organisations are invited to carry out "institutional change relating to HR management, funding, decision- making and research programmes

through Gender Equality Plans which aim to:

- Conduct impact assessment / audits of procedures and practices to identify gender bias

- Implement innovative strategies to correct any bias

- Set targets and monitor progress via indicators"[5]

The European Commission has conducted two surveys (2012/3 and 2014) to measure the level of progress made by research organisations in the EU in implementing the policy priorities of the ERA. The ERA surveys include questions that explore the actions taken by research organisations to promote gender equality.[6]

The country clusters that structure twenty of these policy briefs are based on the classification of countries according to the ERA facts and figures 2014 report. Two variables define the clusters. The first regards self-reported levels of implementation (RPOs and RFOs) per country compared to the EU average - for example the percentage of RPOs that are implementing any recruitment and promotion policies for female researchers in a given country- compared to the EU average.[7] The second variable concerns the presence (or absence) of national level policy measures in this field according to the European Commission. On this basis five groups of countries- could be discerned:

- Implementation above EU average, measures identified
- Implementation above EU average
- Implementation below EU average, measures identified
- Implementation below EU average
- No implementation[8]

For each of the policy areas: 1) Recruitment and Promotion Measures; 2) Adoption of Gender Equality Plans in RPOs, 3) Gender Dimension in Research Content (RPOs), 4) Gender Dimension in Research Content (RFOs), and 5) Gender-Balance in Decision-Making – four country groups have been identified. In all policy areas (except Gender Dimension in Research Content [RFOs]) policy briefs are targeted at those four country groups with implementation above/ below EU average with/ without policy measures. We have titled our policy briefs accordingly:

- Implementation below EU average (no measures) – *Where to Start?*

- Implementation below EU average, measures identified – *How to*

Consolidate?

- Implementation above EU average – no measures – *How to Lead?*

- Implementation above EU average, measures identified – *How to Innovate?*

In the case of Gender Dimension in Research Content (RFOs) - we have included the group of countries identified as having 'no implementation'- whilst 'frequent support above EU average' – is absent, as no country forms part of this group.[9]

The policy briefs are structured on the basis of the survey findings despite the limitations of the ERA survey. The limitations of the survey include that it was a self-assessment - so the implementation figures are based on those organisations that reported that they were implementing certain measures. It also only concerns those RPOs which answered the ERA survey (they employ 515 000 researchers -around 20% of total EU researchers). The sample for the ERA Survey was not randomly selected and the results have not been weighted due to a lack of substantiated information about the sample frame and the whole population of RPOs. It is therefore not possible to infer the statistics to the wider population.[10]

Despite these limitations, structuring the policy briefs along these lines meant that we were able cover the range of countries from 'proactive' countries to 'inactive' countries. The EC report on gender equality policies in public research highlights that policy developments over the last five years show a widening of the gap between proactive and relatively inactive countries as regards gender equality policies in R&I (France is the only country which has clearly improved its position from relatively inactive to proactive).[11] There seems to be a real need for policy briefs to target different country groups according to levels of 'activity' – i.e. 'proactive' countries – those with measures and 'inactive' countries – i.e. those without measures. Whilst the ERA survey has its limitations – it has enabled us to group countries according to self-reported levels of implementation at the institutional level along with the presence or not of national level measures.

The policy briefs attempt to provide examples of legislation, policies, initiatives and measures that can be taken at both the national and institutional levels. Examples of legislation, policies, initiatives and measures have been taken from a variety of key sources including the GenPORT Policy Environment Report (2015), European Commission (2014) Gender Equality Policies in Public Research

Report, the GENDER-NET Analysis Reports (2015), Gender Summit Conference Reports, and the LERU (2015) report. Other valuable sources include the deliverables for various FP7 structural change projects including INTEGER and GENOVATE, and the European Conferences on Gender Equality in Higher Education, altogether eight by 2015, enabling exchange between researchers, practitioners and policy makers across Europe and beyond regularly since 1998. There has been an attempt to include examples from a wide range of national contexts.

These policy briefs are designed to be read by national level policy makers and institutional science leaders and have been updated twice during the course of the project to take the findings of new research into account. The second and final updates of the twenty thematic briefs were undertaken on the basis of online discussions held on the portal. Each partner was responsible for holding a thematic online discussion, inviting key experts on the subject to participate and then integrating the key findings of the online discussion into the relevant policy briefs. The online discussions can be accessed in the following links:

[Recruitment and Promotion of Women Researchers](#)

[The Implementation of Gender Equality Plans](#)

[Gender Dimension in Research Content – Research Performing Organisations (RPOs)](#)

[Gender Dimension in Research Content – Research Funding Organisations (RFOs)](#)

[Gender Balance in Decision-Making](#)

The GenPORT consortium would sincerely like to thank all those experts that participated in our online discussions and contributed to this GenPORT Policy Brief Series.

1   European Commission, (2012a). A Reinforced European Research Area: Partnership for Excellence and Growth, COM (2012) 392, p3.
2   Ibid. pp. 3-4.
3   Ibid., p12.
4   Ibid.
5   Ibid., p13.
6   European Commission, (2015a). ERA Facts and Figures 2014, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union. p9.
7   ERA Facts and Figures 2014 states: "In the absence of targets or identified desirable levels of implementation, it is difficult to identify and assess an adequate level of ERA implementation for each of the actions. Whenever meaningful, the degree of support and the implementation are compared with the average observed at EU level. The use of the EU average does not imply that it should be considered to target a desirable level of implementation." p9.
8   Ibid.
9   In the case of classifying EU Member States according to the level of provision of support to the inclusion of gender dimension in research content in research agendas by funders – categories were the following: frequent, occasional, none, non-applicable, no answer.
10 European Commission, (2015b). She Figures, 2015, Handbook, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p111. Therefore the percentage of organisations that report implementing policy measure X is not indicative of the overall national situation – in some cases a high percentage of organisations indicated that the measure was not applicable to their organisation.
11 European Commission, (2014a). Gender Equality Policies in Public Research, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, pp17-18.