LEADERSHIP GENDER EQUALITY: COMMUNICATION AND REFLECTION

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Abstract**:** *Industrial leadership is a pillar of EU Horizon 2020 Program and it is supposed to enhance the competitiveness of European industry. Developing leadership based on excellence without gender bias in industrial technologies will result in fast and fair progress to be deployed in new products and services. Industrial leadership also implies that companies are assisted with financial instruments for accessing risk finance; in addition to this, activities to help SMEs bring new innovations to the market are encouraged. The central idea is to support the development of new, interdisciplinary, innovative and impact-oriented solutions to the societal challenges we face. Thus support is granted to European companies in developing products and services for European consumers and for the global export, capitalizing on all available human resource capable to excel, i.e. by enforcing the principles of gender equality/gender mainstreaming in business and research.*

Keywords**:** *leadership, gender equality, society challenges, EU H2020*

Introduction

Societal challenges include a number of areas where the contemporary European society is facing significant socio-economic issues. Concerns about such relevant problems are shared by citizens across the continent and are characterized by the fact that solutions cannot be found in an acceptable timeframe without major technological breakthroughs. The nature of such challenges is hence highly complex and finding solutions requires an interdisciplinary approach. Societal challenges are addressed in a pillar of Horizon 2020, whose central idea is to support the development of interdisciplinary, innovative and impact-oriented solutions to these predefined issues. Thus support is granted to European companies for developing products and services for the European consumers and for the global export.

Industrial Leadership is the second pillar of Horizon 2020 and it is supposed to boost the competitiveness of European industry by developing leadership and industrial technologies, (ICT, nanotechnologies, materials, biotechnologies, and space communication), to be deployed in new products and services.

Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in leadership for research and business

The power and innovative strength of the European Research Area can only be secured in the long term if it makes full use of existing potential in all areas. In many cases

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the expertise of highly qualified women in business management and science is still not used to the fullest extent possible. All across Europe, the proportion of women who are in high positions with successful careers and in leadership places drops with every step upwards in the hierarchy, whereas the numbers of men and women (doctoral) students are roughly equal. As a result, female business managers or researchers are often under-represented in expert groups and in decision-making committees or advisory boards. It is also a fact that applies to research and innovation, so part of the solution for society challenges nowadays is including the gender dimension.

In the further development of ERA, member states should create even more numerous incentives to remove gender-specific barriers to recruitment, retention of employment and career progression throughout Europe. Furthermore, efforts need to be made to achieve a gender balance in decision-making processes and decision boards of European organizations. The envisaged target is the participation of at least 40% of the under-represented gender in committees which are involved in recruitment/career progression and in establishing and evaluating research programmes. Another aim is to further strengthen the gender dimension in national and European research programs and projects.

Gender equity means making better use of the highly qualified women potential in business and science so as to secure the member states' excellent performance in the long run.

Cross-cutting initiatives

Cross-cutting initiatives as well as targeted gender equality initiatives in the science system have contributed to recent successes. These initiatives increase the proportion of women in business engineering and academic leadership positions, involving stakeholders and partners from science, research, industry, government and associations. Legislation in force grants equal opportunities for men and women in the science system. The law on gender equality also requires recipients of funding from governments to commit to gender equity. Measures have been put into place in recent years to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions in particular. Specifically, they have set themselves the task of achieving target quotas for the recruitment of young female researchers and executive personnel which are based on a cascade model. This has set the right course but further efforts must be made as women remain significantly under-represented in top-tier positions in the science system.

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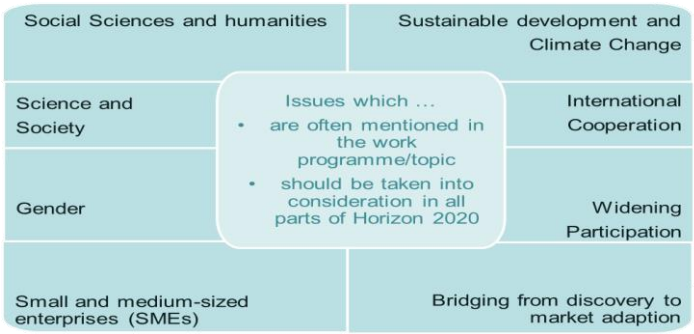

Fig.1. Cross-cutting issues in EU H2020 Programs, cf. www.cost.eu/participate

Gender mainstreaming is a priority objective of EU governments with regard to science. Binding target quotas are to further increase the proportion of women and achieve a percentage of at least 30% women in executive committees. Science organizations are jointly pursuing the target of an appropriate representation of women at all system levels. Giving men and women equal career opportunities requires broader, firmer establishment of family-friendly structures within organizations. Organizations must make even better use of existing instruments and seek to optimize such tools through regular mutual exchange of best practice.

One factor which has been neglected up to now is the consistent and appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in basic and application-oriented research. The term gendered innovations introduced by a group of experts at EU level is based on a belief that the inclusion of gender aspects in research can assure scientific excellence and enable the development of more targeted solutions. Besides including projects in sociological gender research, the program also funds medical projects which integrate the gender aspect in their research method.

Measures to ensure gender equality in leadership positions

EU Governments aim to increase the gender dimension in national research and innovation programs. Hence measures have been implemented in this area, among which we enumerate:

- Ensure equal opportunities in organizational structures and processes. Assuring equality of chance will remain a key focus area in the planned further development of research and innovation. Important measures include equal opportunity in the processes and procedures of selection of candidates for job vacancies and committees, career development schemes to support equal opportunity career management and the promotion of family-friendly organization structures. The overall aim is to increase the proportion of women at all career stages and in leadership positions and on executive boards of science organizations in particular, based on ambitious target quotas following the cascade model.
- Continuation of the program for women professors which is a highly effective measure to increase the number of women in leadership positions in higher education institutions.

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- Stronger incorporation of the gender dimension in national & European research programs: Research – for example to solve global challenges – produces better results for society when it more deliberately takes account of the gender perspective. In future the EU will incorporate the gender dimension more systematically into the planning, implementation and evaluation of funding programs and projects. The EU Framework Program Horizon 2020 will serve as orientation as it takes particular account of the gender aspect; in fact, it has made gender one of the decisive factors in the selection of project proposals of equal merit. The Federal Government will ensure in the program committees of Horizon 2020 that the high EU standards for gender equality are safeguarded in projects and committees.
- Promotion of young researchers from a gender perspective: an important requirement for the improvement and assurance of young researchers' career prospects is to achieve a stabilization of women's careers in science and to support family-friendliness within the science system.
- The research-oriented standards on gender equality serve as a key frame of reference for the development of equal opportunity. Science organizations involved in the EU Research Pact also established target quotas in keeping with organization-specific cascade models; the quotas are based on the proportion of women at the career level immediately below. The organizations plan to implement specific measures to achieve these target quotas by 2017. Key activities aim to recruit and employ a greater share of female researchers. A number of organizations have introduced mentoring programs to prepare highly qualified women for senior positions.

These programs assist women, particularly after they have obtained their doctorate degree, to carefully plan their careers, to build networks in the field and to assume leadership duties with confidence. The Minerva-FemmeNet mentoring program matches female mentors with mentees, thus enabling senior researchers to share their experience with the young ones. STEM initiative participants (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) pursue careers in science and take on leadership positions in applied research.

Gender equity in knowledge transfer leadership positions

Effective knowledge transfer is one of the key factors for the successful translation of ideas and research results into innovations and creation of competitive economic values. Since it facilitates cross-border exchange of knowledge in particular, the European Research Area is one way to better exploit the potential to increase the economic impact of research.

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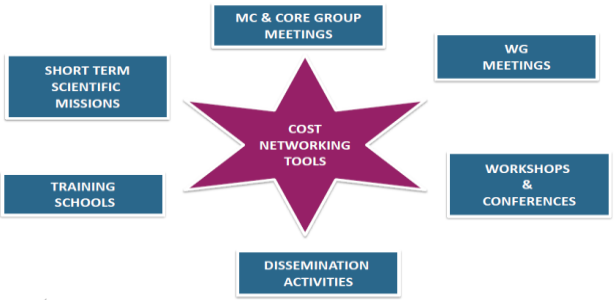

Fig. 2. Networking tools in EU H2020 Programs, cf. www.cost.eu/participate

This ERA priority focuses in particular on strengthening the network between science and industry and on the role of public-sector research in open innovation. This means that higher education and research institutions handle intellectual property on the basis of corresponding comprehensive strategies demonstrating professionalism in their knowledge and technology transfer activities so as to enable cooperation with industry on an equal footing.

Knowledge generation and transfer increasingly occur via digital means, so an ERA priority is the expansion of a seamless online space for free circulation of knowledge and technology.

In particular, it means granting and expanding access to publicly-funded scientific data and findings (Open Access). Open Access is also a major topic at European level within the framework of Horizon 2020. One provision accounts for the special needs of international research cooperation and industry.

The transfer of scientific knowledge between the public and private sectors enjoys a long and successful tradition, being one of the cornerstones of a country's economic strength. One aim is to strengthen the strategic cooperation between science and industry and to accelerate the efficient commercialization of scientific knowledge such as the Leading-Edge Cluster Competition, the funding initiative Research Campus-Public-Private Partnership for Innovation, the Entrepreneurial Regions innovation initiative, the funding programs EXIST-University-Based Business Start-Ups, SIGNO-Protection of Ideas for Commercial Use, and the SME Central Innovation Program. The research and transfer activities of the non-university scientific organizations which are carried out within the Pact for Research and Innovation are also key elements in disseminating new findings and methods.

The digital ERA improves access to scientific information, via great numbers of initiatives in a well-appointed landscape of repositories and open access journals. More important steps have to be taken towards creating more science and research-friendly copyright laws that provide the authors of scientific texts with legal protection when they grant open access to their research publications upon expiry of twelve months after first publication, for example by uploading it on the Internet. Other important aspects of priority include policy advice for governments and society as well as enhanced science communication which have gained in importance and visibility.

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Conclusions

Industrial leadership also includes financial instruments to assist companies in getting access to risk finance; in addition to this, activities helping SMEs bring innovations to the market are encouraged. Excellence and fair competition require gender equity in decision-making, promoting networking and transfer between science and industry.

An important target in this context is to develop the opportunities which digitization offers so as to establish, secure and promote national and trans-border exchange of information in science and research.

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