

# Implementation of ERA priority 4 “Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in Research and Innovation”

**GENDERACTION will soon release its full report on “National roadmaps and mechanisms in ERA priority 4” which analyses different approaches of Member States to the implementation of gender equality in National Action Plans and Strategies (NAPs). The present Briefing Paper aims to highlight key results and a set of criteria which allow identifying good practice NAPs and good practice measures. The aim is to support further development of existing NAPs and thereby to strengthen gender equality in the ERA community and structures.**

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## **Priority 4 in National Action Plans (NAPs)**

European Research Area (ERA) priority 4 focuses on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research and innovation. The objective is to foster scientific excellence and a breadth of research approaches, by fully utilising gender diversity and equality and avoiding an indefensible waste of talent. Within their national action plans (NAPs) Member States are asked to develop policies which address gender imbalances particularly at senior levels as well as in decision making and which strengthen the gender dimension in research. Member States should initiate gender equality policies in research performing organisations (RPOs) and research funding organisations (RFO). They should also regularly monitor the effectiveness of such policies and adjust measures as necessary.

The report on the implementation of priority 4 within NAPs is based on two main sources: an analysis of NAP documents and a survey of members of the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SGW GRI), including Associated Countries which submitted a NAP. The survey was conducted in autumn 2017. A total of 27 countries participated in the survey, which represents a response rate of 82%.

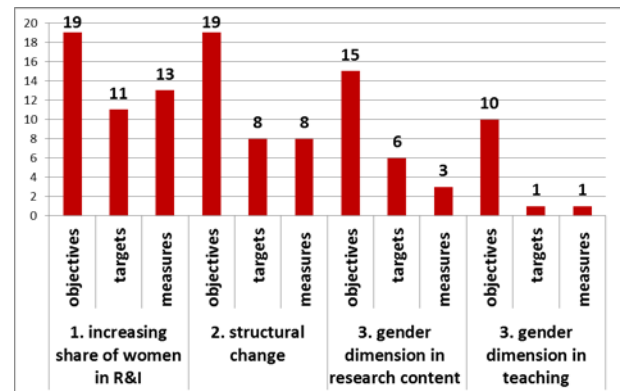
## **Implementation of priority 4 at Member State level**

The analysis of NAP documents reveals **different approaches to NAPs** in different countries as well as a **different level of implementation of gender equality policies**. While some countries describe the whole gender equality policy mix in their NAPs, others describe the current focus of gender equality policy or the process by which an existing policy mix is to be further developed. At the other end of the spectrum are countries which formulate a general commitment to gender equality or do not address gender equality in their NAPs at all. The NAPs also differ in the concept of gender equality used. While some countries address all three main ERA gender equality objectives (increasing the share of women in all fields and hierarchical levels of R&I; structural change to abolish barriers for female carriers; integration of the gender dimension in research content and teaching), others focus on only one or two objectives.

The survey results confirm the different level of implementation of priority 4. All countries participating in the survey had either already submitted a NAP or planned to do so. All but one of these NAPs contain gender equality objectives, yet only two thirds of them also contain concrete targets or measures, while half are linked to a specific national monitoring system.

This **gap between objectives and measures** appears for all three dimensions. While 19 NAPs address the objective to increase the share of women in R&I, only 13 contain corresponding measures or policies. The situation is very similar with regard to the objective of structural change (19 NAPs mention the objective; eight contain measures). The gap becomes even more pronounced in the case of the third objective: 15 NAPs address the objective to strengthen the gender dimension in research content but only three contain measures. Ten NAPs mention the objective to integrate the gender dimension in teaching but only one contains measures.

**Graph 1: Objectives, targets and measures**



Furthermore, both the NAP documents and the survey show that priority 4 is in most cases conceptualised as an **independent topic**. Only seven NAPs or 29% link priority 4 with at least one of the other priorities. Hence, gender is not integrated as a cross-cutting topic in the NAPs.

The survey reveals **differences between EU15 countries and newer EU Member States** (which joined the EU from 2004 onwards) in several respects:

- For 57% of newer Member States, the NAP is the first policy document on gender equality in R&I; the same holds for only 25% of EU15 countries.
- Priority 4 is more often interlinked with other priorities in EU15 countries (39% versus 14%).
- Newer Member States refer more often to difficulties regarding development of priority 4.
- The survey results also show that the structural change goal of abolishing barriers for women's careers is more present in EU15 countries.

Of those countries which had submitted a NAP, about 60% of EU15 countries and 33% of countries which joined the EU from 2004 onwards mention concrete policies or measures in their NAPs. Respondents were asked to fill in an extra fact sheet for each ongoing or planned policy. In total, 65 policies and measures from 12 countries were received. According to the respondents, 46 of these policies and measures constitute good practices. However, the respondents' assessments of whether a measure or policy constitutes a good practice is based on different criteria (e.g. recently introduced policies, policies that address a topic for the first time, measures with an innovative approach). Hence, the survey results illustrate the need for a discussion of the criteria for good practices. The first GENDERACTION Mutual Learning Workshop therefore focused on this issue.

Of those countries which have submitted a NAP or plan to do so, 13 (52%) have a national monitoring system for gender quality in R&I which considers further indicators in addition to the main indicator for ERA priority 4 monitoring (women in grade A positions in the higher education sector). If a national monitoring system does exist, the indicators focus in most cases on the share of women in different fields or hierarchical positions (13 cases). In ten countries, monitoring addresses structural change in RPOs, while in eight countries indicators focus on structural change in RFOs. Only two countries have indicators in place that focus on the gender dimension in teaching and research content.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The different foci in NAPs could be interpreted as different positions taken by countries in the gender equality policy development process or as the result of a different conceptualisation of gender equality.

These aspects illustrate on the one hand the **need for capacity-building activities for stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of NAPs**. GENDERACTION will provide capacity-building activities that focus on the gender concept that forms the basis for the NAPs and the deviances from the ERA concept of gender equality. Capacity-building activities will also provide support for further development of NAPs, priority 4 within NAPs as well as concrete measures. This includes the development of evaluation competences and self-reflexive competences on the part of stakeholders, to enable them to assess measures and policies, make empirically based decisions, coordinate the implementation of NAPs and involve relevant stakeholders. Capacity-building activities will also provide support for stakeholders responsible for priority 4 in mainstreaming gender into other priorities.

Equally, the different priority 4 foci should be taken up in the **gender equality policy discourse at the European level**.

- The different foci in NAPs indicate a need for more coherent guidelines for the development of priority 4 in NAPs. This should be combined with a discourse which focuses on good practice NAPs as well as good practice measures. The identification of good practices requires criteria for the assessment of NAPs and measures. GENDERACTION provides a set of criteria (see the box).
- Specifically, the different interpretations of gender equality should be addressed in the further development of NAPs. Most countries focus on one or two of the three gender equality objectives. The dominant goal is to increase the share of women in R&I. It is important to stress the three-dimensional construct of gender quality in future policy discourse. Furthermore, it is important to shift the focus from women as the main target group to the underrepresented sex. For instance, only few NAPs address the under-representation of men in female-dominated fields.
- It is equally important to provide a policy forum (e.g. through ERAC) focusing on priority 4 as well as on the integration of gender aspects in other priorities (gender mainstreaming). In addition to such an exchange among Member States, a specific feedback format could be linked to the national ERA progress reports.
- The fact that priority 4 is conceptualised in the majority of NAPs as an independent topic without interlinkages with other priorities means that gender equality is not considered in other priorities. Hence, gender is not mainstreamed, and there is a risk that interventions of other priorities could reinforce existing gender inequalities or imbalances. Therefore, a strong position of priority 4 is needed as well as a strategy that allows stakeholders responsible for priority 4 to address other priorities.
- Lastly, it is evident that a stronger focus on gender in research content and teaching in the NAPs is required. There are only a few examples of policies and measures that focus on this objective. Gender in research and innovation content in the next European framework programme Horizon Europe needs to be emphasised using a twofold approach: (1) to strengthen the gender dimension in research projects in order to develop good practices on a project level and (2) to develop good practices for transferring the available gender knowledge into targeted, effective policies and measures.

Within the GENDERACTION project, criteria for good practices have been developed in a participatory process (Mutual Learning Workshop). Workshop participants agreed to the criteria but considered them difficult to implement due to a lack of data, human resources, commitment and consistency in databases. They also formulated a need for the integration of gender equality in other priorities as well as a need for specific support and input regarding the mainstreaming of gender in other priorities. The workshop participants stressed the importance of a self-reflexive approach by the implementing institution in addition to external evaluation and the need for sanctions if measures/policies are not implemented as agreed. Furthermore, they argued for provisions to safeguard good practice measures against institutional or political change.

### **Good practice NAPs**

- are based on an empirical baseline assessment,
- contain objectives and targets which are derived from the baseline assessment,
- formulate objectives, targets and concrete measures consistently,
- consider gender in all priorities (gender mainstreaming), thus interlinking priority 4 with other priorities,
- include concrete budgets and resources,
- define responsibility for the implementation of NAPs or specific actions (the responsibility for concrete measures should be assigned to specific stakeholders),
- include a responsibility for the coordination of the six priorities as well as of concrete measures within each priority
- use consultation in writing NAPs (stakeholder involvement)
- include concrete deadlines for implementing measures and actions,
- include a description of monitoring and/or planned evaluation activities.

### **Good practice measures or policies**

- are based on an empirical baseline assessment,
- explicitly aim to contribute to at least one of the three main gender equality objectives,
- formulate concrete targets and target groups,
- are based on a theory of change/programme theory (a formulated set of assumptions why and how the policy should reach its targets and target groups),
- involve relevant stakeholders in the development of the policy/measure,
- are allocated sufficient and sustainable funding,
- produce results which are sustainable and significant (in terms of coverage, resources, timeframes, etc.)
- develop a dissemination or communication strategy (what has been done, what has been achieved, what worked, what didn't work), and
- are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis with regard to their implementation status and impact.

## **References**

GENDERACTION Horizon 2020 Project 7414 (2018). *Report on national roadmaps and mechanisms in ERA priority 4*. Full report will be available at GENDERACTION website [www.genderaction.eu](http://www.genderaction.eu) in autumn 2018.

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