

Courageous Revolution speeds up Evolution

First Memorandum on the European Commission's Proposal for the next EU Research & Innovation Programme (2021-2027) *Horizon Europe*¹

14 October 2018

«Gender equality is not just about fairness and justice in Europe – it is also a necessity to achieve sustainable peace, security, development, economic prosperity and growth around the world»
(Joint statement of the European Commission on the occasion of International Women's Day 2018, Brussels, 6 March 2018)

Considering the perspectives of both men and women in research and innovation means its outcomes are relevant to the whole population — not just half of it! Teams and decision-making bodies should thus have balanced gender representations. Additionally, gender needs to be considered as part of the R&I process and content itself to provide results that are useful for all citizens.
(A Practical Guide to responsible Research and Innovation. Key Lessons from RRI Tools, 01.12.2016, p.11)

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Introduction

The European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS welcomes the European Commission's proposal for *Horizon Europe*, the 9th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027).² EPWS appreciates that, as in the years since 2000, also the new Framework Programme includes measures on gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation, which had a strong impact in EU Member states in the past. Indeed Article 6 „Implementation and forms of EU funding“, paragraph 9 of the proposal specifies: „*The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in bodies such as expert groups.*“

The present Memorandum is an initial reaction from EPWS to the proposal as well as a call for action for an even more consequent integration of gender equality and the gender dimension in *Horizon Europe*. It is the vision of the European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS that the new

¹ “Over the past few years, the name "Horizon 2020" has sent a clear message across the globe: excellence. We have built a global reputation as a world leader in research and innovation programming, and it is for this reason that we believe the successor to Horizon 2020 should capitalise on this strong brand name. With Horizon Europe, we are enacting an evolution not a revolution. Building on the success of the past is putting our best foot forward for the future.” Commissioner Moedas, Blog entry 2 May 2018
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/moedas/blog/horizon-2020-horizon-europe_en (14.10.2018).

² Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination. Brussels, 7.6.2018, COM(2018) 435 final 2018/0224 (COD) and ANNEXES to the Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination. Brussels, 7.6.2018, COM(2018) 435 final, ANNEXES 1 to 5.

Framework Programme should have a clear and strict directive promoting equal opportunities in research and innovation, as is currently postulated in *Horizon 2020*, in order to close still existing gaps, enhance the programme's orientation towards present priorities in research and innovation, and ensure a more substantial and sustainable European added value.

EPWS values the clear programme structure of *Horizon Europe* with three proposed pillars – „Open Science“, „Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness“ and „Open Innovation“ – as well as the part „Strengthening the European Research Area“. The following comments are aimed at maximizing the impact of the future EU research and innovation programme, addressing each programme section separately.

Pillar I 'Open Science'

EPWS welcomes Open Science, the ongoing importance of the European Research Council ERC, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions MSCA, and the European research infrastructures. The Platform also appreciates **excellence** as one of the core guiding principles in all parts of the programme.

EPWS wishes to point out that equal opportunities – which include gender equality as well as the inclusion of the gender dimension in research content and method – are the precondition of any future-oriented, excellent and open science. In order to ensure excellence, EPWS strongly recommends a continuous consideration and integration of equal opportunity goals and concerns in all parts of Open Science and Open Innovation.

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With regard to Pillar I, EPWS recommends to

- 1) **foster the mandatory implementation and monitoring of gender equality**, including individual measures as well as structural change in research institutions;
- 2) **promote the mandatory implementation and monitoring of the integration of the gender dimension of research content and method throughout the entire research process**. As put forward in the Marie Curie Actions work programme³, the quality and credibility of research/innovation projects depend not only on the level of novelty but also on the appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects. (MSCA Work Programme, p. 72, 73, 74) Careful sex and gender analysis is key to the production of research results that benefit all genders;
- 3) **govern Open Science by a multidimensional, gender-sensitive, more open and inclusive notion of excellence**. Scientific excellence is inseparable from the social, technical and financial opportunities available to researchers; equal opportunities play a key role in this context. A definition of excellence solely based on mathematical indicators, such as the number of publications, is not objective for instance with respect to researchers who due to family responsibilities may have career breaks. A diverse composition of research groups as well as gender awareness and multidimensional evaluation criteria are preconditions for excellence. Consequently, the gender bias in current ways of defining and evaluating scientific excellence needs to be genuinely examined in order to create a more open and inclusive, gender-sensitive understanding of excellence in the assessment of scientific quality.

³ Horizon 2020. Work Programme 2018-2020. 3. Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (European Commission Decision C(2018)4708 of 24 July 2018).

Pillar II ‘Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness’

The new Framework Programme will have the great opportunity to continue the successful work of *Horizon 2020* in which gender is a cross-cutting issue and is mainstreamed in each of the different parts of the Work Programme with the aim to ensure a more integrated approach to research and innovation by pursuing *Horizon 2020*'s three gender equality objectives: fostering gender balance in research teams as well as in decision-making, and integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation (R&I) content.⁴

In order to take the achievements of *Horizon 2020* to the next level and to reach an even more wide-spread and consequent integration of equal opportunity issues, EPWS recommends that

- 1) **Gender and equal opportunities should remain a cross-cutting issue in the whole 9th Framework Programme;**
- 2) Equal Opportunities – including **Gender Equality and the Gender Dimension – should be added as a new specific Area of Intervention in Pillar II** „Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness“, in the cluster „Inclusive and Secure Societies“⁵;
- 3) Special attention should be paid to the **gender-equal and gender-sensitive identification, development and management of missions.**

EPWS appreciates that Pillar II will aim at tackling global challenges and create more impact by focusing on achievable **missions** to foster citizen involvement. EPWS supports the general idea of missions to create ways of better communicating to **society** what science and research are concerned with in Europe, across all sectors and disciplines, and to invite citizens to participate in the co-design and co-creation in all missions and research projects.⁶ In this process, it is mandatory to **address female citizens directly** by integrating both gender balance and the gender dimension in the development of missions at all stages.

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In order to achieve this target, EPWS recommends to

- a) **create a specific mission on equal opportunities in science and research addressing both key areas: gender equality and the gender dimension in science and innovation;**
- b) **mainstream gender equality and the gender dimension of research and innovation in all further missions;**
- c) **ensure gender balance in mission development and on mission boards including the involvement of citizens in the process.**

European societies are composed of different genders whose interests and aspirations might coincide or be of diverse nature. EPWS holds it for evident, therefore, that the only way of linking *Horizon Europe* with the citizens in Europe in order to establish their interest in European research and innovation, their approval regarding the EU research agenda as well as their compliance with

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/node/797> (14.10.2018).

⁵ Pillar II is the right place in *Horizon Europe* for addressing gender equality because Pillar II focuses on the UN „Sustainable Development Goals“ (SDGs), especially SDG 5 Gender Equality, which is to „Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls“.

⁶ See also LAB – FAB – APP. Investing in the European future we want. Report of the independent High Level Group on maximising the impact of EU Research & Innovation Programmes (Lamy Report), European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Brussels, July 2017, Recommendation 5. Adopt a mission-oriented, impact-focused approach to address global challenges Action: set research and innovation missions that address global challenges and mobilise researchers, innovators and other stakeholders to realise them. Recommendation 8. Mobilise and involve citizens Action: stimulate co-design and co-creation through citizen involvement.

respect to the necessary funding is to address all groups of society explicitly and directly. To convincingly show that the concerns of the female half of the population are taken into account and that research in the EU is serious about ensuring that its outcomes are relevant for the whole population and benefitting all gender equally, it is important to give a voice to female scientists and female citizens in order to integrate their specific topics, needs, concerns and aspirations in the research and innovation process.

A specific, separate mission targeting the mandatory integration of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation will enable and foster a broad societal dialogue about equal opportunities in science and innovation. It will ensure a high involvement of citizens by sending a strong signal, particularly to women as members of society that their perspectives and concerns regarding the content of as well as their benefit from research results are valued and matter, and are taken into account when setting the research agenda to address global challenges. (EPWS Reply to EU Commission Call for Feedback on Missions on 02.04.2018)

Pillar III 'Open Innovation'

EPWS welcomes Open Innovation, stressing that – same as Open Science (see Pillar I) – future-oriented open innovations require gender equality and the integration of the gender dimension in innovation content, i.e. need to be **gendered innovations**⁷.

In order to achieve this goal, EPWS recommends the

- 1) **adoption of an inclusive and gender-sensitive notion of innovation** which, next to bringing “new solutions to global societal challenges to the market” (Annexes to the proposal, p. 3) by generating new products, explicitly seeks **to improve societal structures and create social innovation**, thereby encouraging much needed social responses to the grand challenges that cannot be satisfied by products alone;
- 2) **mandatory integration of all key aspects of gender equality and the gender dimension in science and research**, as described above for Open Science, also in Pillar III;
- 3) **balanced participation of women scientists and gender researchers in the governing bodies** of the European Innovation Council, the European innovation ecosystems, as well as The European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

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Part 'Strengthening the European Research Area'

EPWS welcomes this transversal programme section underpinning the entire framework programme and supporting “activities that contribute to a more knowledge-based and innovative and gender-equal Europe” (Annexes to the Proposal, p. 4) to strengthen the five key priorities of the European Research Area⁸, among which *gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research*, encouraging gender diversity to foster science excellence and relevance.⁹

⁷ See e.g. <https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/>.

⁸ (1) More effective national research systems; (2) Optimal transnational co-operation and competition; (3) An open labour market for researchers; (4) Gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research; (5) Optimal circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge including via digital ERA (COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth. Brussels, 17.7.2012, COM(2012) 392 final).

⁹ See also EUROPEAN COMMISSION. Guidance to facilitate the implementation of targets to promote gender equality in research and innovation. Prepared by the European Commission and the Helsinki Group

EPWS confirms that an intensive exchange with society is needed to communicate and align research with the interests and aspirations of civil society, being composed of different genders with coinciding or diverse goals and needs, and to increase the effectiveness and openness of science and research (see above, Pillar II, 3)). The Science with and for Society“ (SWAFS) interim evaluation of 29.05.2017¹⁰ as well as the Lamy Report of July 2017¹¹ recommended specific actions to better involve citizens. The Commissioner for Research and Innovation frequently expressed the imperative of bringing science and research nearer to society to obtain citizen participation and reflect the concerns of society.

Considering the fact that the SWAFS Interim Evaluation Report 2017 clearly states that the EU added value of SWAFS is “very high”, that the programme has become “a beacon for all those in Europe dealing with the links between science and society”, filling a “niche in the R&I funding landscape”, bringing “a scale and an international focus that is lacking in similar national-level programmes”, helping to “set policy orientations at Member State level”, promoting “cross-fertilisation of innovative approaches, and greater coherence in policy responses” (Interim Evaluation Annex 2, p. 1164) as well as the high overall relevance of SWAFS (Interim Evaluation Annex 2, p. 1162), EPWS is surprised that the Commission’s commitment with respect to achieving these goals in *Horizon Europe* does not manifest itself in a **specific programme line dedicated to Science, Society and Citizens activities**.

EPWS fears that the integration of the activities of the current SWAFS programme in a *Horizon Europe* programme part ‘Strengthening the European Research Area’ alongside numerous other activities as foreseen in the current Commission proposal will put the achievement of the afore mentioned Commission targets at risk, having a negative impact, and meaning the loss of great opportunities and a rather weak science-society funding line. The Platform shares the evaluation report’s impression that “the likely consequences of stopping SWAFS would be a divergence of national and regional approaches, a reduction in the scale of funding available to tackle these issues, a reduction in the transfer of knowledge and mobility of researchers, a reduction in national-level attention to SWAFS issues, and a corresponding reduction in the potential of R&I to provide solutions to societal challenges” (Interim Evaluation Annex 2, p. 1165).

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Against this background, EPWS recommends to

- 1) build on the success of the former programmes “Science and Society” (SaS) (FP6, 2002-2006), „Science in Society“ (SiS) (FP7, 2007-2013), and „Science with and for Society“ (SWAFS) in the current *Horizon 2020* (2014-2020) and **clearly highlight the implementation of Science with and for Society topics and goals in *Horizon Europe* by continuing SWAFS as a separate programme area** in the part ‘Strengthening the European Research Area’, and
- 2) **provide the SWAFS area with its own, separate funding line**, thereby addressing the clearly identified “ambition-budget mismatch” (Interim Evaluation Annex 2, p. 1143) and the fact that SWAFS at present is clearly over-subscribed in some lines” (Interim Evaluation Annex 2, p. 1144).

on Gender in Research and Innovation, in consultation with the European research area stakeholders’ platform. February 2018.

¹⁰ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT INTERIM EVALUATION of HORIZON 2020, Annex 2, Brussels, 29.5.2017 SWD(2017) 221 final (p. 1118-1165).

¹¹ See footnote 6.

Courageous revolution speeds up evolution

Continuing and joint efforts, supported by special programmes and targeted missions are needed to further push gender equality and the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation in the European Research Area (ERA), to address existing gaps regarding their disciplinary width, and to be able to react to the challenging effects of fast changing societies on gender equality and the gender dimension in the further development of ERA.

Participation of society, its readiness to deal with societal challenges as well as political compliance will only be achieved if research and innovation are in touch with and reflect citizens' personal interests. It is therefore crucial to address and involve all societal groups. Gender equality and the integration of the gender dimension in science, research and innovation are key to achieve this goal.

To effectively attain the Commission's goals concerning Open Science and Innovation as well as citizen involvement in their co-design and co-creation, EPWS encourages the European Commission to enhance the evolution intended by *Horizon Europe* and confirm the seriousness of its endeavour to include all members of society in the research process by integrating strong and sustainable programme features to ensure gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation as outlined above – even if some of them, such as the creation of a specific mission on gender equality and the gender dimension in science and innovation, would indeed be revolutionary.

The European Platform of Women Scientists is convinced that integrating courageous revolution in this sense in *Horizon Europe* would clearly speed up evolution.

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The European Platform of Women Scientists EPWS, the voice of women scientists in EU research policy, is an umbrella organisation bringing together networks of women scientists and organisations committed to gender equality and the integration of the gender dimension in research in all disciplines in Europe 28 and the countries associated to the European Union's Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development. EPWS currently counts more than 80 member organisations, together working for more than 12.000 women researchers all over Europe active in academia and in industrial research. EPWS constitutes a strategic instrument in European research policy, complementing various initiatives taken at the European level to ensure a better participation of women scientists in research and in the research policy process as well as the inclusion of the gender dimension in research.