GENDERACTION Position Paper on gender in Horizon Europe co-design 2021-2024 for the 1ˢᵗ Strategic Plan

The present GENDERACTION position paper is aimed at highlighting where gender is considered and where it is not and should be raised in the EC ***Orientations towards the first Strategic Plan implementing the research and innovation framework programme Horizon Europe*** and in the related ***online public consultation for Horizon Europe co-design 2021-2024.*** Some of the following comments have already been put forward in the ***GENDERACTION policy briefs on Horizon Europe.***

Horizon Europe's greatest role in terms of global challenges, SDGs, and EU policy priorities needs to better target gender equality

Gender equality is included in the EC "Orientations" document as a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and a policy priority but it is not considered as a global challenge. However, gender is included as 1 out of the 5 cross-cutting factors[1] in the *Supporting R&I policy priorities, specific issues and coordination of relevant activities through Horizon Europe* section, in the same "Orientations" document: "***Inclusion of gender perspectives will enable better quality and higher societal relevance of research and innovation activities.***" In the same section, gender is also considered as 1 out of 7 *cross-cutting R&I policy priorities and specific issues*:

> "Gender equality is a core policy objective for all European Union activities and a crucial factor in the achievement of sustainable development and inclusive economic growth.

> Activities will aim at eliminating gender inequalities throughout R&I systems and the gender dimension will be adequately integrated in R&I content across the whole programme. The latter is particularly relevant for global challenges, including in areas such as health care, artificial intelligence and robotics in which there is a growing worldwide recognition that gender differences, in terms of needs, behaviours and attitudes, play an important role in research design/content, and hence determine the societal relevance and quality of research outcomes."

Recommendations set 1: Gender inequalities persist despite gender equality being a core fundamental European value. Gender equality is both an end in itself and a cross-cutting issue for other policy priorities, SDGs and global challenges. Therefore, given what is stated in the General Orientations section, GENDERACTION recommends that gender equality should be explicitly acknowledged and addressed in each Cluster's global challenge as both crucial factor and specific aim. That is, not only focusing on how gender equality factors can help to better solve a particular global challenge, but also on how approaches to such a particular global challenge can accelerate solutions to gender equality challenges at EU and beyond.

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[1] These cross-cutting factors range from core EU values to legal and operational provisions.

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Gender in the five EU policy priorities

The EC "Orientations" document for Horizon Europe identifies five policy priorities[2]: Protective Europe, Competitive Europe, Sustainable Europe, Fair Europe and Influential Europe. Of these five, only Fair Europe addresses gender but only in Cluster 2 (Culture, creativity and inclusive society)[3] while failing to address gender in Cluster 1 (Health) where gender is of utmost importance.

Hence, gender issues are not addressed at all in "*Protective Europe*", "*Competitive Europe*", "*Sustainable Europe*" and "*Influential Europe*" policy priorities.

Recommendations set 2:

1) A *Protective Europe* needs to consider the impact of gender-based violence as well as women's and girls' specific vulnerabilities in migrant and refugee flows in addressing the improvement of the management of EU external borders and maritime security.

2) For a *Competitive Europe*, the relevance of the gender dimension needs to be highlighted as a key inclusiveness factor for more appealing and creative jobs in Europe and for the development and uptake of new digital technologies, as well as a market-making factor equally addressing the needs of all populations.

3) For a *Fair Europe*, it is of utmost importance to also integrate the gender dimension into the health impact of innovative, technological and digital solutions and services as well as into healthy ways of living and working environments with a view to overcoming the negligence of women's health needs in the past.

4) For a *Sustainable Europe*, the gender dimension needs to be considered when deciding on the use and distribution of resources as well as in the design of communities, cities and rural areas of the future and the necessary technologies for this.

5) For an *Influential Europe*, both to increase the influence of Europe and to reach the SDGs, gender needs to be mainstreamed in the STI international cooperation model of Horizon Europe. This will advance EU R&I capacities as well as the attainment of political, social, economic and human rights commitments.

Further input on gender in the targeted impacts from Horizon Europe

Pillar 1 Excellent Science:

Gender is NOT mentioned in the "**Relevant activities in *Pillar I – Excellent Science***" section of the EC "Orientations" document.

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[2] These five priorities are consonant to the four ones in which the EU Council new strategic agenda 2019-2024 (adopted on June 20th 2019) focuses on: protecting citizens and freedoms; developing a strong and vibrant economic base; building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe; and promoting European interests and values on the global stage.

[3] "Reversing socio-economic and **gender inequalities** via strategies of inclusion, non-discrimination, social protection and social investment."

> **Recommendations set 3:**
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> Work-life balance measures, protection against sexual and sexist harassment, integration of the sex/gender analysis into the R&I content and other provisions to incentivize gender equality policies in hosting institutions need to be harmonized across Pillar 1 funding lines. Particularly, research infrastructures need to mainstream gender in their core activities and governance systems.

Pillar 2 Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness:

Only 4 out of the 6 clusters in Pillar II consider some gender impacts and only partially in the EC "Recommendations" document, but gender should be (better) considered in all of them:

> **Recommendations set 4:**
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> **Health (Cluster 1):** Sex and gender aspects are relevant to and hence must be addressed in all the six health-related challenges, not only in "*Staying healthy in a rapidly changing society*". For instance:
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> In "Living and working in a health-promoting environment" it must be taken into account that differences have been shown in toxicity studies and that the risk factors mentioned are gendered.
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> In "Tackling diseases and reducing disease burden" specific attention needs to be paid to knowledge gaps pertaining to women's health conditions and diseases that have been historically marginalized. Specifically, research into antimicrobial resistance must look into sex and gender differences in resistance.
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> In "Ensuring access to innovative, sustainable and high-quality health care in the EU", studies show that women tend to receive less attention from medical professionals and that their ailments are treated as less serious (e.g., pain).
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> In "Unlocking the full potential of new tools, technologies and digital solutions for a healthy society" , there is some evidence that healthcare-related solutions relying on big data analysis may be developed based on skewed samples (e.g., almost entirely male data input). New technologies and digital solutions must take care to avoid the biases that exist in current data sets in order not to reproduce existing biases (gender, race).
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> In "Maintaining an innovative, sustainable and globally competitive health industry" attention should be paid to avoid the "male default" in the designing and standardization processes, as well as in their outcomes, in order to ensure inclusive approaches to the specific characteristics, needs and interests of citizens, patients and care providers of all genders.

Recommendations set 5:

Culture, creativity and inclusive society (Cluster 2): Although activities in this cluster are (*inter alia*) specifically expected to *help reverse social, economic, cultural and political inequalities and their causes and promote gender equality*, it is crucial to highlight that women need to also be considered beyond the role of victims of gender inequalities. This means understanding and supporting the important role women play in the social and economic transformations and enhancing democracy.

It is welcomed that the R&I orientations for Cluster 2 are aimed at elucidating *the societal – including political, ethical, cultural, **gender** and economic – effects of technological advancements and the impact of drivers of change*, explicitly addressing gender in its 3 intervention areas: "*Democracy and governance*", "*Cultural heritage*" and "*Social and economic transformations*". In addition:

- The new Horizon Europe broad line on "*advanced strategies and innovative methods for gender equality in all social, economic and cultural domains, and to deal with gender biases and gender-based violence*" needs to ensure regular annual calls with enough funding for an appropriate number of projects. This broad line will have to stimulate crucial R&I for the implementation and design of better EU gender equality policies (addressing both gender-specific and gender-mainstreaming policy approaches), in addition to bringing innovative solutions to attain main targets of UN SDG5. For instance, it will have to bring focus on issues such as:

  – Innovative solutions and instruments to prevent and eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls worldwide, and the role of new technologies in relation to forms and demonstrations of gender-based violence;

  – Advanced strategies and tools to attain global empowerment of women and girls in all spheres of life, including the recognition of care work;

  – Evidence on how to accelerate progress and improve the impact of EU specific gender equality policies and enforceable legislation, including the identification of barriers, resistances, and best and promising practices in the implementation of gender equality policies in Europe (e.g., for effective gender-training strategies);

  – The role of education in preventing and combating all forms of gender discrimination, as well as in promoting non-traditional careers (e.g., women in ICT, men in social work), through innovative pedagogical practices and inclusive educational contents;

  – Evidence on how gender equality accelerates progress across other EU sectoral (development) and horizontal policies (e.g., agriculture, energy, environment), including the identification of gender barriers to progress in these areas, with a view to facilitating better EU gender-mainstreaming policies in the design and implementation of those other EU policies, instruments and activities that have an effect on UN SDGs beyond gender equality;

- – Identification and anticipation of emerging gender gaps and needs related to present or future EU and global transformations, as well as how to better address them, including present and potential synergies among policies and instruments;

- – Interdisciplinary knowledge base on how (intersectional) gender inequalities are produced, maintained and challenged, as well as to develop innovative methods to fight against gender stereotypes, gender biases, and all forms of (horizontal and vertical) gender segregation related to the asymmetrical gendered division of labour, power, care and domestic work, etc.

- Acknowledging that the EC "Orientations" document puts a focus on intersections between gender and other social categories in the "Social and economic transformations" area of intervention, this needs to be considered in all the other Clusters and in the remaining intervention areas within Cluster 2.

- In "Enhancing democratic governance" attention should be paid to gendered impacts of polarisation and extremism and contribute to understanding the current backlash against gender equality in the EU in relation to growing nationalism.

- In "Promoting cultural heritage", paying attention not only to women´s contributions to creative sectors, but also to the gendered patterns in the cultural production and sectors and how these can be used to either perpetuate or challenge gender inequalities.

- In "Management of social and economic transformation" attention needs to be paid to the gendered impacts of the transition to automation and digitalization as well as the ways various growth models and welfare state regimes contribute to achieving gender equality. Management of mobility and migration must address the ways in which migration drivers are gendered and effect the social fabric in countries of origin and target countries.

Recommendations set 6:

Civil security for society (Cluster 3): It is welcomed that the EC "Orientations" document mentions the need to take into account the gender dimension as *part of R&I relating to the human and societal context of security and of disaster resilience and response.* However, it fails to mention gender when referring to security, vulnerability, etc., as impacts of a Protective Europe. It must be noted that the European Parliament legislative resolution of 17 April 2019 on the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe mentioned the crimes based on gender, sexual orientation or racial discrimination in cluster 3, which must be included among the targeted impacts of security in public spaces and cybersecurity. Finally, women's and girls' specific vulnerabilities in migrant and refugee flows must be considered when addressing the improvement of the management of EU external borders and maritime security.

Recommendations set 7:

Digital, industry and space (Cluster 4) only refers to gender in 1 out of its 3 EU policy objectives, particularly in the one devoted to **a major contribution to inclusiveness**, where gender and other diversity issues are expected to be reflected where appropriate regarding the involvement and empowerment *of workers, consumers and firms to make sure that they have access to, and take up, these technologies.* However, it is also important to consider that digitalization will affect women and men differently and hence gender aspects must be addressed. Equally, artificial intelligence and robotics, big data and machine learning have been shown to reproduce gender biases and gender aspects must be considered. Lastly, the different needs of women and men groups need also to be reflected in the processes of involving target groups for developing other technologies.

Recommendations set 8:

Climate, energy and mobility (Cluster 5): this cluster fails to mention gender aspects although, clearly, consideration must be given to the gendered aspects of climate change drivers, impacts, mitigation solutions and adaptation patterns; the difference between women's and men's energy needs, choices and consumption patterns when designing energy plans; the complexities of women's and men's needs regarding mobility and transport solutions for communities and cities.

Recommendations set 9:

Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment (Cluster 6): this cluster also fails to mention gender aspects. Explicit attention must be paid to the empowerment of women in agriculture as well as the different conditions facing women and men in rural areas and the impact of evolving gender roles on activities in the primary sector. Consideration must be given to the nutrition status of women and men when developing sustainable and healthy diets and sex/gender analysis must be performed on the effects of pesticides, antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance.

Recommendations set 10:

Widening Participation and Strengthening the ERA:

The part on *Widening Participation* within the EC "Orientations" document fails to consider gender among its relevant activities, but GENDERACTION policy brief no.11 (https://1url.cz/9MU36) argues that in implementing Horizon Europe the Commission should adopt concrete measures to incentivize the widening countries to develop gender equality policies in order to bridge the continued significant gap.

Gender equality and other forms of diversity are considered as R&I priorities in the expected impacts of the *Strengthening the ERA* part, which will also improve

international cooperation, ethics and integrity, and scientific input to other EU policies, but it is vital to improve the funding and provisions for structural change projects aimed at implementing gender equality plans in Research Performing Organizations, to achieve a sustainable progress.

Thus, in implementing Horizon Europe, the Commission should adopt concrete measures to incentivize the Widening countries to develop gender equality measures, for example through a dedicated gender-related call for proposals or by topping up Widening project budgets for targeted gender equality measures to be implemented within the project.

Missions areas and partnerships

Missions are one of the main novelties of Horizon Europe, high-ambition, high-profile initiatives that should provide concrete solutions to challenges facing European citizens and society. Missions are intended to achieve a measurable goal within a set timeframe, with impact for science and technology and/or society and citizens that could not be achieved through individual actions.

Recommendations set 11: To achieve appropriate impact for science, society and citizens, the gender dimension has to be explicitly included in each mission area text. A future mission area on gender equality will be crucial for the second period of Horizon Europe to integrate R&I activities of different parts of the Framework Programme addressing SDG 5. Similarly, as social transformations and inequalities have been identified as an area for future partnerships, gender transformations and inequalities will require specific attention within this partnership area.

Pillar 3 Innovative Europe:

Gender is NOT mentioned in the **"Relevant activities in *Pillar III – Innovative Europe"*** section of the EC "Orientations" document.

Recommendations set 12: Involving more women and sex/gender analysis methods in the process of innovation will facilitate more competitive products that do not take the male consumer as a default model. For further information see the policy brief on Gender and Innovation recently launched by the Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (available at https://1url.cz/tMUj0).