

The Gender Equality Strategy and the Gender Equality Plan 2024-2025

National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan”, Bucharest

Research Department

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Abbreviations and definitions

GE	Gender equality
GEP	Gender equality plan
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
M	Manager
MD	Medical Director
CD	Steering Committee (Comitet director)
CA	Board of Directors (Consiliul de administrație)
Sex	Either of the two major forms of individuals that occur in many species and that are distinguished respectively as female or male especially on the basis of their reproductive organs and structures (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Gender	The behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Sex vs Gender	A clear delineation between sex and gender is typically prescribed, with sex as the preferred term for biological forms, and gender limited to its meanings involving behavioural, cultural, and psychological traits. In this dichotomy, the terms male and female relate only to biological forms (sex), while the terms masculine/masculinity, feminine/femininity, woman/girl, and man/boy relate only to psychological and sociocultural traits (gender) (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)

Introduction

The Gender Equality (GE) strategy for 2024-2025 was developed by the Research Department at National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan”, Bucharest, on the basis of input from the entire Department and takes into account everyone who works at our Department. The GE strategy was built on the provisions of the European Charter for researchers and of the Code of Conduct in the process of the recruitment of researchers¹, 2015-2019, the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025² and the Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans³.

The motivation for developing the GE strategy is to ensure that our Research Department is a safe place for everyone, and all activities and processes that take place respect the principles of equality, diversity, inclusiveness and non-discrimination.

Based on the GE strategy, the Institute developed the GE Plan (GEP) for 2024-2025, with concrete actions and measures, as well as indicators for measuring progress of its implementation and revisions.

Enforcing its mission and values, the GE strategy and the GEP of the Research Department at National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan” ensure and promote equality and diversity to knowledge and the acquisition of skills to all. The objectives of the GE strategy are implemented through specific actions that aim at safeguarding an equal and inclusive organizational culture and promoting gender-equality at all levels. As such, the GE strategy and the GEP will pro-actively enable gender equality awareness raising, skills and competences; gender balance in decision-making structures and processes, including recruitment; gender equality in research; and integrating the gender dimension in the entire research process.

I. Review of requirements, policies and case studies

Prior to developing the GE strategy and the GEP, the management of the National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan” appointed a working group to conduct a literature review of the existing requirements, policies, recommendations, examples and case studies pertinent to discrimination, inclusiveness and gender equality, with a special focus on research performing organisations (RPOs).

The resources used in this literature review study are presented in Annex 1.

¹ https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/tf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>

II. Diagnosis (data collection and analysis)

II.1. Data collection

The following indicators were selected at the Research Department from “Ana Aslan” National Institute of Gerontologi and Geriatrics as relevant for the discussion on gender equality issues:

- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by domains, function (including administrative/support staff)
- Numbers of women and men in research and administrative decision-making positions (e.g., top management team, boards, committees, recruitment and promotion panels);
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave.

1. Women and men in leadership positions

Table 1. Research institute management

	Woman	Man
General Director		X
Medical Director	X	
President of the Scientific Committee		X
Economic Director	X	
Head of Research Department	X	
TOTAL	3	2

Table 2. Other Heads of Institute structures / units (independent units, other than research):

	Woman	Man
Human Resources and Legal Adviser Adriana Ivan	X	
Public Acquisitions Marian Mirea		X
Secretariat Elena Lili Surugiu	X	
TOTAL	2	1

2. Women and men – research staff

Table 3. Total number of research staff, per department

	Experienced researchers (CS I, CS II, CS III)	Early-stage researchers (CS and ACS)	Total women	Total men
Clinical Department	0 W	1 W	1 W	
	0 M	0 M		
Biology of Ageing Research Department	3 W	1 W	4 W	
	0 M	0 M		
Psychogerontology and Social Gerontology	5 W	1 W	6 W	
	0 M	0 M		
Total women	10	0	11	
Total men	0	0		0

3. Women and men – administrative and support services

Table 4. Total number of women and men in administrative and support services

	Women	Men
Office administration support (secretaries)	1	0
IT support services	0	1
TOTAL	1	1

II.1. Data analysis

We conducted internal analyses of the data collected, and reviews of existing policies addressing gender equality and inclusiveness. The analyses took place in internal meetings, with an even number of participants, with equal numbers of men and women.

The conclusions of the internal audit were then analysed in the Steering Committee, approved in the Board of Directors, and then communicated to the entire research institute staff.

With mandate from the Board of Directors, the Manager committed to the development and implementation of the GEP for the Research Department at National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan”, for 2024-2025.

1. Quantitative analysis of data

The analysis of numerical data illustrated that:

- there are more women than men in the Steering Committee (CD);
- there are more women than men in management;
- in research positions are only women, which could be attributed to the technical character of the research carried out;
- the number of women is almost equal to that of men in administrative positions.

2. Qualitative analysis of data

The qualitative research showed that:

- Combining work and family life – women and men alike declare that they are responsible for family duties, alongside their spouses;
- The expectation of international mobility is more difficult for both women and men to reconcile with taking care of children;
- Both women and men get involved in housework and prefer to work remotely; parental responsibilities delay research work and discourage both women and men from taking up administrative positions and being more proactive in the activity;
- Women and men with small children rarely take trips to international or national events, although they publish together with the rest of the team; they become less involved in the social life of the department, and less frequently decide to take up administrative positions;
- The gender dimension is one of the topics of our research;
- The research institute is perceived as a safe place, without gender-violence;
- The research institute is overall perceived as inclusive.

The important conclusions of the internal analysis at Research Department from National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan” are:

- We need to attract equally more women and men into our positions;
- We need to include more gender oriented topics into our research;
- We need to develop a gender strategy and a GEP for 2024-2025, with clear actions and targets, and responsible persons

III. GE Strategy and GE Plan

III.1. GE Strategy 2024-2025

Based on the internal review and the national and European policies and requirements, the Board of Directors and the Manager committed to developing the institute strategy for gender equality for 2024-2025, and the corresponding GEP.

Research Department at National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan” decided on creating the function of GE officer at the institute. The GE officer has a proactive role in implementing and monitoring the GE strategy.

Specifically, the GE officer contributes to setting up, implement, monitor and evaluate the GEP; provide practical support and tools to the actors involved in the GEP implementation; cooperate with and engage stakeholders at all levels in order to ensure the implementation of the GEP’s actions; raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality in the research institute; assess the progress towards gender equality in the institute.

The institute management mandated the GE function (officer) at the institute and a dedicated working group to develop the GE strategy and the GEP 2024-2025. The GE working group included men and women representatives of research institute leadership and researchers, representatives of research institute administration and support services.

The GE Strategy comprises the following areas of intervention and objectives for 2024-2025:

Area of intervention	Objective(s)
1. Work-life balance and organisational culture	Promoting integration of work with family and personal life
2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture, processes and practice
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Promoting processes to favour and support gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments
4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content	Promoting a gender and sex perspective in research process Promoting the integration of a sex and gender perspective in research activity
5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Raising awareness about the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity

III.2. GE Plan 2024-2025

Research Department at National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan” comprises areas of intervention, objectives, key measures, target audience, timeline, responsible persons, and indicators to measure progress.

Area 1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Objective: Promoting integration of work with family and personal life

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline		Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2024	2025		
1. Use of ICT-based systems for enhancing flexibility and improving a better planning of working meetings accordingly to work life balance needs (e.g., management and communications of the meeting schedule/timing)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	Installation of free to use online communication applications on computers (such as Skype, etc.), use of electronic signatures	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer, IT services
2. Availability of flexible working times arrangements, from part-time to remote working	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	P.O. 38 (the internal procedure for remote work) is updated whenever necessary to reflect this measure.	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer

Area 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Objective: Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture, processes and practice

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline		Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2024	2025		
1. Appointing a delegate in the institute, with a proactive and/or consultant role to be responsible for monitoring and ensuring that workplace procedures and practices respect gender equality	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X		A decision is made by the director nominating the delegate responsible with this measure.	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer, GE delegates
2. Routine revision of any text, communication, images, from a gender equality and diversity standing point	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	Procedures are revised.	GE officer

Area 3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Objective: Promoting processes to facilitate and support gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline		Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2024	2025		
1. Disseminate and communicate career good practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers and academics)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	A decision is made by the director nominating the GE officer responsible with this measure.	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer

Area 4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content

Objectives:

- Promoting a gender and sex perspective in research process
- Promoting the integration of a sex and gender perspective in research activity

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline		Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2024	2025		
1. Disseminate and communicate career good practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers and academics)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	<p>Initiatives for raising awareness on female role models are disseminated to the staff.</p> <p>Initiatives for raising awareness on gender diversity in research teams are disseminated to the staff.</p>	GD, HoDs, HR, GE officer

Area 5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Objective: Raising awareness about the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline		Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2024	2025		
1. Reinforce de Code of Ethics of the institute with provisions against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	The Code of Ethics is regularly updated, with a view to this measure, as long as any other necessary ones	GD, HoDs, HR, GE officer

IV. Monitoring and evaluation of the GEP

The implementation of the GEP at Research Department from National Institute of Gerontology and Geriatrics “Ana Aslan”, the progress against the GE strategy aims and objectives are regularly assessed, through periodic meetings of the GE officer and the management team. The implementation of the GEP will be permanently monitored by the GE officer at the institute. The GE officer is responsible with collecting data and input and will perform a first analysis of the progress of the GEP (against the indicators), gather knowledge and feedback.

The GE function at the institute will conclude findings reports (once a year), which are then presented to the research institute management (GD, HoDs) and discussed. These meetings will provide valuable conclusions on the implementation of the GEP. These meetings will also provide comments and recommendations that will enable adjustments and improvements to interventions on the GEP for the following year.

The periodic reports allow the continuous review of the impact of the GEP as well as keeping the wider community informed and engaged in the progress towards gender equality. The review of progress reports includes qualitative information as well as quantitative data, such as updates on human resource data disaggregated by sex, monitoring data to keep track of the implementation of key actions.

After their conclusion and adoption by the research institute management (Board of Directors, GD, HoDs), the periodic (annual) GE progress report is published on the research institute website and thus communicated to the entire scientific community.

Annex 1. List of sources used for the literature review

(in alphabetic order)

Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission,

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-commission>

EU FESTA - Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes – Recommendations for a Gender Sensitive Application of Excellence Criteria,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/festa_gender_issues_recruitment_appointment_promotion.pdf

EU Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

EUA - Universities' Strategies and Approaches towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,

<https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/universities-39-strategies-and-approaches-towards-diversity-equity-and-inclusion.pdf>

EUCEN - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in European Higher Education Institutions,

https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

European charter & code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers,

https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/ttf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu>

GARCIA – Mapping organizational work-life policies and practices,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/garcia_report_mapping_org_work-life_policies_practices.pdf

Guidelines for using gender-sensitive language in communication, research and administration,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen_university_guidelines_for_using_gender-sensitive_language.pdf

Horizon Europe General Annexes,

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf

Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans,

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>

LERU - Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach,

<https://www.leru.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-universities>

Science Europe - Practical Guide TO Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/se_gender_practical-guide.pdf

Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/science_open_research_student_eval_teaching_effectiveness.pdf