



# EU Insight - Creating Gender Equality in Science & Research

*On 8 March 2015, International Women's Day was celebrated around the world. Gender equality is a cornerstone of the European Union and applies to all European policies including research and innovation. The [Strategy for equality between women and men \(2010-2015\)](#), adopted in September 2010, is the European Commission's (EC) comprehensive work programme on gender equality and pursues three objectives, namely: gender equality in careers, gender balance in decision-making and the integration of the gender dimension in the content of research.*

## **Gender equality in the European Research Area (ERA)**

To create the very best conditions for researchers and scientists, the 28 member states of the European Union (EU) are working towards the creation of single [European Research Area \(ERA\)](#). Their common goal is to establish a unified research area which is open to the world, and in which researchers and knowledge circulate freely. Creating equal opportunities for women and men is an integral part of ERA, and a key priority since 2012.

To this end, EU member states are invited to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention and career progression of female researchers, address gender balance in decision-making and strengthen the gender dimension in research programmes. The European Commission encourages EU member states to create the appropriate legal and policy environment to incentivise institutional changes.

Funding agencies, research organisations and universities are on the forefront in the implementation of institutional changes, in particular through Gender Equality Plans. Scientists themselves can contribute to change practices: Networking among practitioners and professional associations, platforms of women scientists and other networks play a key role in this context.

## **Gender Equality in Horizon 2020**

Gender is a cross-cutting issue in Horizon 2020. The promotion of gender equality in research and innovation is a commitment of the European Commission. It is enshrined in the core documents establishing Horizon 2020, with the following three objectives:

1. [Gender balance in decision-making](#)

The Commission has set a target of 40% of the under-represented sex in expert groups and evaluation panels. Whereas H2020 Advisory groups have a target of 50% for the under-represented sex in expert groups and evaluation panels. For 2014-2015, there is a 52% representation of women.



## 2. Gender balance in research teams at all levels

Applicants for funding are encouraged to promote gender balance at all levels in their teams and in management structures. Gender balance in teams will also be taken into account when ranking proposals with the same evaluation scores.

By signing the grant agreement, beneficiaries commit to promoting equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of their action. They also commit to aim, as far as possible, for gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including at supervisory and managerial level.

## 3. Integrating the gender dimension in the content of R&I

R&I needs to adequately take into account the needs, behaviours and attitudes of both women and men.

In Horizon 2020, the gender dimension is explicitly integrated from the outset in many of the specific programmes. So far, more than 100 topics out of 610 are concerned with gender. These topics are spread across 13 different programmes out of 20. For each of these topics, one or more proposals will be selected. This gives a promising outlook on the number of projects that will be developing a gender dimension and on the new knowledge that they will bring about.

### **Facts and figures: *She Figures***

What is the proportion of female to male researchers in Europe, and how is this proportion evolving over time? In which scientific fields are women better represented? Do the career paths of female and male researchers follow similar patterns? Are statistics on women in science comparable across Europe? How many women occupy senior positions in scientific research in Europe?

Published every three years since 2003, *She Figures* replies to these questions. This publication presents human resource statistics and indicators in the research and technological development (RTD) sector and on gender equality in science.

The [She Figures 2012](#) show that despite progress, gender inequalities in science tend to persist. The publication provides an overview of the scientific fields where women are better or less represented, and compares the research workforce in different economic sectors (e.g. higher education, government, and business sectors). In 2015, the next edition of *She Figures* will be published.

### **Sources and further information:**

[European Research Area - homepage](#)

[Horizon 2020 - Promoting Gender Equality in Research and Innovation](#)

European Commission's [Strategy for equality between women and men \(2010-2015\)](#)

[She Figures 2012](#)

In 2009, the European Commission published a selection of European women scientists' profiles. "[Women in Science](#)" highlights compelling stories of some of the heroines of European science throughout the ages.

The book can be accessed online and free-of-charge [here](#).