

Women, research and universities: excellence without gender bias

Dr. Katrien Maes
Chief Policy Officer LERU

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University
Iasi
23 October 2013

University of Amsterdam

Universitat de Barcelona

University of Cambridge

University of Edinburgh

University of Freiburg

Université de Genève

Universität Heidelberg

University of Helsinki

Universiteit Leiden

KU Leuven

Imperial College London

University College London

Lund University

University of Milan

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

University of Oxford

Université Paris-Sud 11

Pierre & Marie Curie University

Université de Strasbourg

Utrecht University

University Zurich

21 European research-intensive universities committed to the values of high quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded
in 2002

Influence policy in Europe
Develop best practice
Relevance for all RIUs

League of European Research Universities



- **Encourage education** through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding
- **Foster the creation of new knowledge through basic research** as the ultimate source of innovation in society
- **Promote research across a broad front**, which creates a unique capacity to respond to new opportunities and problems.

Commitment



Proactive policy development and articulation through the publication of **papers**, **meetings** in Brussels and other activities

Opportunities for institutional **reflection**, exchanges of **experience** and collaborative **actions**

Another paper on women in research?

- Not another paper on gender inequalities
 - About stimulating change
- **Commitment** to undertake action
 - **Four priority areas for action**
 - **Recommendations** for universities and other actors

“Women, research and universities: excellence without gender bias” LERU position paper, 2012

LERU universities' commitments

- **Leadership:** promote gender diversity of academic staff
 - in conformity with institutional, national and other regulatory frameworks
- **Partnership:** develop or continue to implement Gender Equality Strategies/Plans
 - “share and learn” regular exercise, develop good practice
 - effectiveness of the measures and processes
- **Engagement:** LERU to engage with EU policy makers, funders and other actors

“Digression”: the evidence base

1. Leaky pipeline
2. Bias
3. Money
4. Gender dimension in research

Action area 1: Commitment at the top

1. University vision, leadership and support
2. Gender Strategy or Action Plan
3. Dedicated processes and structures
4. Funding
 - structural change,
 - longer-term planning,
 - attractiveness for researchers at all career stages

How do you show leadership?

Making sure a gender strategy is:

- ✓ Based on a vision
- ✓ Linked to other policies
- ✓ Embraced by the faculties
- ✓ Made concrete with an action plan and structures
- ✓ Funded with structural money
- ✓ Made visible
- ✓ Reviewed and updated regularly

Action area 2: Implementation and management

- Right mix of measures
 - Aligned with institutional and regulatory situations
 - Which career phases
 - Aim at structural change
 - **Career development** measures
 - Gender-specific
 - **Work-life balance** measures
 - Gender-neutral

What measures to take?

Career development measures

- ✓ Usually gender-specific
- ✓ Recruitment and promotion efforts
- ✓ Composition of committees
- ✓ Time for research (competitive grants, support)
- ✓ Time for service
- ✓ Coaching and mentoring (one-on-one, group)

What measures to take?

Work-life balance measures

- ✓ Usually gender-neutral
- ✓ M/Paternity leave (post-return career plan)
- ✓ „Bridging“ measures and funding
- ✓ Child care provision
- ✓ Dual career programmes

Action area 3: Framework conditions

- Ensure effective uptake of measures
- Required:
 - **Transparency** – e.g. clear hiring criteria and procedures
 - **Accountability** – e.g. gender equality officers on committees
 - **Monitoring** – e.g. information gathering, benchmarking

Action area 4: Gender dimension in research

- Universities to promote and support
- Important in various research areas (esp. life sciences)
- Important to increase the level of awareness

Recommendations for universities

- Commit at the **top** and throughout the institution to gender equality.
- Develop or implement a Gender **Strategy** (or Action Plan) with the support of all divisions and levels within the university. It can be embedded in a broader Equality Strategy and should be managed professionally, possibly through a dedicated structure such as a Gender Equality Office.
- Aim to ensure sufficient **funding** for all gender equality activity. Funding structures should enable long-term planning of gender equality activity to achieve structural change.
- Select the right mix of gender-specific career development **measures** and gender-neutral work-life balance measures.
- Pay attention to transparency, accountability and monitoring to ensure successful implementation and **improvement** where needed.
- Promote and support a **gender dimension in research**, taking into account the specificities of particular research fields.

Recommendations for funders

- Develop own gender **strategies** or action plans.
- **Consult** regularly with universities on gender-related funding issues.
- Ensure selection **boards** are gender-sensitive.
- **Promote** or demand a gender dimension in research projects.
- **Monitor** the results of funding gender actions.
- Provide longer **funding** periods that make research careers more attractive.

Recommendations for governments

- Consult regularly with universities about how to best **attract and retain** women in research careers.
- Avoid overly prescriptive or regulatory approaches, working instead with positive **incentives**.
- Collect, disseminate and learn from national and **international good practice**.
- Establish effective mechanisms for collecting **gender-disaggregated statistics**.
- Develop or maintain **monitoring** of gender policies, which requires gender-sensitive statistics on resource assignation, distribution of time and space, access to information, and other areas.
- Establish specific measures to **evaluate and monitor actions** aimed at achieving effective parity and equality in universities.

Recommendations for academic publishers

- Ensure that an appropriate gender dimension in research is embedded in their science policies.

LERU on-going activities

“Leading by example”

- LERU WG on gender under the aegis of the RCC
- WG steering group: Simone Buitendijk (Leiden), Jadranka Gvozdanovic (Heidelberg) and Brigitte Mantilleri (Genève)
- WG consulted on ERA and Horizon 2020 documents
- Gender included as one of the commitments in LERU-EC MoU on ERA
- Meetings with EU officials (ERC, Cabinet and DG R&I), handover of the LERU paper to MGQ, roundtable discussion in Brussels, participation at EU Gender Summits, etc.
- Mutual learning and exchange of information in the WG
 - Gender strategies and action plans
 - Number of research staff (four career stages)
 - Top management (academic and non-academic)
 - Top appointment committees (stage IV- grade A)
 - ERC grantees
- Gender dimension in research

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?



Contact:

Katrien Maes
Chief Policy Officer, LERU
katrien.maes@leru.org

LERU Office
Schapenstraat 34
3000 Leuven
Belgium
www.leru.org

