



# EU Insight - Gender Summit 4 - Europe

Gender is one of the cross-cutting commitments in Horizon 2020 and centers around the following objectives:

- Gender balance in research teams
- Gender balance in decision-making
- Integrating gender/sex analysis in R&I content [1].

Being also an important criteria in the European Research Area, the ERA Progress Report 2013 found that “in terms of gender, European research still suffers from a substantial loss and inefficient use of highly skilled women and from a lack of gender dimension in research content. In 2010, women represented 46% of EU PhD graduates, 32.4% of researchers, 19.8% of senior academic staff. Gender unbalance is more striking in decision-making, where only 15.5 % of women are heads of institutions and 10% are rectors in the higher education sector.” [2]

The ‘**Gender Summit 4 – Europe 2014 from Ideas to Markets: Excellence in mainstreaming gender into research, innovation and policy**’ was held from 30 June to 1 July 2014 in Brussels. There were a total of 350 participants from 40 countries representing over 200 science organisations.

Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn stated in her Welcome to the Gender Summit 4:

*"The 4th Gender Summit is focused on Horizon 2020. There's a lot of money at stake in Horizon 2020 and the new rules ensure that women are at the centre of the decisions on how it should be spent and at the heart of the research and innovation that is funded. Horizon 2020 provides a clear incentive to applicants to ensure a better gender balance in their research teams. If two proposals receive exactly the same scores on all other evaluation criteria, the gender balance will be one of the factors in deciding which proposal is ranked higher. Horizon 2020 also promotes the gender dimension in research and innovation content to ensure that it takes into account the needs, behaviours and attitudes of both women and men. This is the way to excellence, jobs and growth. In Horizon 2020, the gender dimension is explicitly integrated from the outset in many of the specific programmes – in more than 100 topics so far out of 610 in total, spread across 13 different programmes. This gives us a promising idea of the number of projects that will develop a gender dimension and of the new knowledge that they will produce. I hope that those attending the Gender Summit and the science community will respond to these opportunities to create better research and more sustainable technological innovations."*



Under the first pillar of Horizon 2020, the ERC has published its own ERC gender equality plan 2014-2020 [3].

Key objectives include:

- (i) To continue raising awareness about the ERC gender policy among potential applicants;
- (ii) To improve the gender balance among researchers submitting ERC proposals in all research fields and within the ERC teams;
- (iii) To continue identifying and removing any potential gender bias in the ERC evaluation procedure;
- (iv) To continue monitoring possible differences in gender specific careers and academic posts, following the ERC grant
- (v) To embed gender awareness within all levels of the ERC processes - from creating awareness about the ERC to grant signing - while keeping the focus on excellence
- (vi) To strive for gender balance among the ERC peer reviewers and other relevant decision making bodies.

In line with the ERC gender equality plan, the Summit concludes that gender balance and diversity should be emphasized in all Horizon 2020 calls as well as in the evaluation process.

Furthermore, more detailed information on gender as an evaluation criterion should be shared by NCPs, applicants, evaluators and experts to ensure that each has the same understanding of the process. A broader training of evaluators on all of the criteria that could be relevant for ranking applications, including the gender dimension was encouraged by the participants of the Summit [4].

Since 2011, the evidence- and consensus-based approach advanced by Gender Summit – Europe has spread to other continents with new platforms created for North America, Africa, Asia and South America regions. Incorporating institutions, leaders, practitioners and experts from different continents transforms the Gender Summit into a global alliance for promoting harmonization of rules and practices to facilitate international collaboration and mobility, excellence and societal advancement [4].

The next Gender Summit will be hosted by the Human Science and Research Council from 28-30 April, 2015 in Cape Town, South Africa. The overarching topics will be poverty alleviation and economic empowerment through scientific research and innovation [5].

Sources:

- [1] [Factsheet Gender Equality in Horizon 2020](#)
- [2] [European Research Area Progress Report 2013](#)
- [3] [ERC Scientific Council Gender equality plan 2014-2020](#)
- [4] [Gender Summit Report](#)
- [5] [Prof. Olive Shisana's announcement of the Gender Summit 2015](#)