



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

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I. Context: Goal, Strategy and Approach

The current Gender Equality Plan is designed as a step-by-step process of progressive institutional change to address differences in the way men and women are valued, leading to unequal opportunities and discrimination.

According to the Council of Europe, Gender Equality is the situation where individuals, regardless of their sex and gender, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations imposed by strict gender roles. The different behaviours, aspirations and needs of everyone are considered, valued and favoured equally. Thus, it indicates the absence of barriers to economic, political and social participation on the grounds of sex and gender and other characteristics.

Nowadays, gender barriers are often more indirect than explicit and therefore difficult to discern. These barriers are maintained by structural phenomena and social representations and beliefs that are resistant to change.

It is important to understand that Gender Equality is not about women and men becoming the same. Gender Equality is about ensuring that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men do not depend on whether individuals are born male or female.

While Gender Equality is the main objective of this Plan, Gender Mainstreaming is the strategy to achieve the main objective.

According to the Council of Europe, Gender Mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and stages, by the actors normally involved in the policy-making.

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming would be to achieve what is called *substantive gender equality*, as opposed to what is called *formal equality* embodied in the existing laws.

In this context, an Intersectional Gender approach is to be applied. The Intersectional Gender approach is a social research method in which gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality and other social differences are analysed simultaneously. According to the Intersectional approach, inequalities are never the result of a single factor, but rather the result of the intersection of different social locations, different power relations and different experiences. The Intersectional approach enables an understanding of both privilege and oppression and allows for multi-level analysis.

II. Organisational Perspective and Internalisation

Inclusive Europe has committed itself to a set of core values of which gender equality and women's empowerment are central.

Inclusive Europe is committed to the principle that women should have equal opportunities and be able to contribute to all aspects of society without discrimination and strives to uphold this in all its activities.

Inclusive Europe is committed to the EU's gender equality objectives, which include:

- Fostering gender equality in scientific careers;
- Ensuring gender balance in decision-making;
- Integrating the gender dimension in R&I content.

INEU's gender equality policy aims to promote equality between women and men to ensure sustainable development.

Inclusive Europe intends to lead and set an example among its institutional partners regarding its gender equality policy. INEU commits to:

- Establishing a roadmap to identify areas for improvement in gender equality.
- Creating a roadmap to highlight the importance of gender equality.
- Dedicating, coordinating and allocating budget and other resources to ensure the effective implementation of gender equality programmes.
- Demonstrating commitment to taking responsibility for advancing gender equality measures.
- Monitoring the progress of INEU on gender equality and adjusting existing policies as necessary.
- Increasing the sensitivity of recruitment practices to gender equality at all levels within the INEU.
- Establishing plans to promote female staff to leadership positions.

Inclusive Europe is committed to periodically evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the current Gender Equality Plan.

III. Principles and Specific Objectives

A. Principles

- Work-life balance and organisational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Equal pay for equal work

- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
- Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Application of the above-mentioned principles in the organisation:

1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

The INEU's policy on gender equality encourages advancement toward more equal relations between women and men. Women's ideas, interests and demands, as much as men's, shape the organisational policies and strategies. As INEU recognises that every policy, program and project has a different impact on men and women, its policies, projects and programs address the differences between women and men. INEU's managers promote gender balance by embracing it in their daily work. A person's rights or opportunities in INEU do not depend on gender. Supportive and flexible work practices are promoted, and family-friendly policies are created to ensure positive impacts on gender balance, especially for women, by successfully enhancing the ability to balance work, family commitments and personal life.

2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

INEU ensures full and equal participation of women and men at all levels, including leadership and decision-making positions. Both men and women have equal access to all positions. INEU also aims to identify barriers to the advancement and participation of female staff in leadership positions.

3. Equal pay for equal work

INEU is committed to providing equal pay for equal work for both men and women. The organisation will establish mechanisms to verify that this principle is always respected. Management will be responsible for periodically verifying that men and women are paid equally for the same job.

4. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Ensuring that recruitment practices are gender sensitive at all levels sets the tone for Inclusive Europe, increases gender sensitivity of the overall policies of INEU, and specifically aims to improve the gender balance in the workplace. Gender balance is a key component of the recruitment policies and is included in the plans that guide recruitment activities, policies, and programmes of the INEU. INEU is focused on providing career development training to help women promote and to achieve gender equality in career advancement and gender balance in leadership positions.

5. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

Gender-disaggregated data collection is included within the strategic framework of INEU's monitoring and evaluation processes. The experiences of women employees are evaluated to identify the obstacles they may encounter and to offer effective solutions to eliminate them. Quality data is provided and updated for information sharing, training and development that

supports gender balance. Training is provided to improve the perceptions of employees on gender balance. INEU is focused on integrating gender equality into its training programs.

6. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

With a zero-tolerance policy for gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, INEU is committed to addressing and developing effective approaches to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in the workplace. A digital system was established to receive, document and act on issues of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, identified by employees. All employees can report problems and challenges through a digital complaints box that ensures complete confidentiality and anonymity.

B. Specific Objectives

- Anticipate problems, prevent them and put in place mechanisms to work towards gender equality
- Assess the current situation in the organisation to determine the problems that need to be solved
- Define short-, medium- and long-term goals and measurable indicators for achieving gender equality in the organisation
- Develop a code of conduct that rejects chauvinistic or racist attitudes in the workplace
- Favour and develop an inclusive culture in the organisation.
- Develop policies, procedures and practices that incorporate the intersectional approach and provide appropriate means to address multiple discrimination (e.g. gender and age, gender and socio-economic status, etc.)
- Integrate gender issues into INEU's policy and board discussions agenda
- Create conditions for women's emancipation
- Provide equal opportunities for men and women to be employed from the earliest stages of the recruitment process
- Ensure equal learning and development opportunities
- Ensure fair compensation and promotion procedures
- Ensure equal opportunities for both men and women to perform well at work and to progress in their careers
- Facilitate reconciliation between private and professional life to reduce inequalities in the labour market and provide equal conditions for working
- Establish appropriate mechanisms to balance work, family commitments and personal life
- Put in place appropriate mechanisms for mothers
- Ensure gender-balanced participation in decision-making positions (by introducing quotas)
- Change perceptions about gender roles and reduce subjectivity around predefined gender roles
- Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism

- Raise awareness among employees and institutional partners about benevolent and malevolent gender bias, their respective characteristics and their impact
- Prevent and combat all issues of violence and harassment against women
- Promote gender equality among its partners, associates and volunteers and systematically integrate gender issues into the agenda of regular meetings with its institutional partners

IV. Actions and Measures to Achieve the Specific Objectives

- Inclusive Europe will make sure, through bilateral discussions or anonymous surveys, depending on the sensitivity of the issue, to always listen to the people concerned and not to decide for them beforehand.
- Periodic surveys will be conducted to determine the real needs of the people concerned (women and men) and then propose solutions, not the other way around.
- A digital complaints box was set up to report problems at any time using anonymous forms.
- A contact person responsible for gender issues will be appointed within the organisation. This contact person will be in close contact with employees and at least one member of the Board of Directors, to ensure that issues are communicated and then reported to senior management.
- An independent committee (with a mixed composition) called the ethics committee will be established. This committee will be composed of 3 members: 1 representative of the board of directors, 1 person with authority over the employees and 1 gender expert. This ethics committee should be reachable at any time, if needed, and will have several roles (please consult the section Ethics Committee).
- For the same position, the employee will be offered the same salary package, regardless of the gender of the person who has been selected for the position.
- Men and women will be offered the same opportunities in promotion procedures.
- Training sessions, coaching or self-esteem-building workshops will be organised by the INEU for employees, trainees and volunteers.
- Once in 2 years, Inclusive Europe will propose a diversity and inclusion training program.
- Educate employees about unconscious gender bias through training, workshops or open dialogue meetings.
- Inclusive Europe will organise awareness-raising events for employees and institutional partners to encourage them to beware of benevolent sexism, which can be far more destructive than malevolent sexism.

V. Quotas, Recruitment Process, Ethics Committee, Complaint Box and Anonymous Forms

1. Quotas

a. Short, medium and long-term quotas for female INEU staff in the organisation's total staff

- Inclusive Europe is guided by the general principle of having 50% women among its staff. Currently, this principle is active, and in effect, therefore no quotas shall be set. However, INEU reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that women represent 50% of the organisation's staff.
- Additionally, INEU is constantly committed to encouraging its institutional partners to set short, medium and long-term quotas for female staff in their organisations.

b. Short, medium and long-term quotas for female INEU staff in management positions in the organisation

- Before deciding on the quotas to be set in the short, medium and long term for leadership positions, an internal meeting will be held to discuss the actual situation in the organisation and to draw up a picture of the current state-of-the-art. Subsequent quotas will be decided on the basis of this overview.
- The initial quotas proposed for discussion are as follows: Within 3 years, 33% of women in management positions (e.g. the Board of Directors), within 5 years 35% and 40% within 10 years.

2. Recruitment Process

a. CVs and Job applications

- Candidates will be selected for interviews solely on the basis of their academic and professional qualifications.
- The recruiting team will refrain from favouritism, discrimination, or prejudice based on subjectivity or hidden biases in the initial phase of the recruiting process.
- In the long term, as the organisation grows beyond 15 people, the recruiting team will assess the appropriateness, desirability and necessity of asking candidates to send in their CVs without names, photos, gender, and nationality and make this a general principle to ensure that the recruiting process is not biased from the start.

b. Job interviews

- Candidates selected for interviews will all be given the same time to introduce themselves and present their resumes. HR representatives in charge of the interviews will refrain from any differential treatment of candidates, regardless of their gender, ethnic origin, or other characteristics.

c. Selection process

- Candidates will be shortlisted and selected solely on the basis of their skills and qualifications. Moreover, in the selection of new staff, particular attention will be given to ensuring that the principles of diversity and inclusion are followed. Given its primary objective of promoting inclusion and interculturalism, INEU is committed to building a multicultural and diverse team that harmoniously integrates people of different nationalities, ethnicities, age groups and gender.

3. Ethics Committee

- An internal meeting will be organised within INEU to discuss and appoint the members of the Ethics Committee. At least 1 representative of the board of Directors, 1 person with authority over employees and 1 gender expert will be nominated.
- Once the 3 members have been designated, they will have their first meeting to clearly define their roles and competencies.
- The members of the Ethics Committee must be reachable at all times and will perform the following roles:
 - receive anonymous complaints from employees;
 - ensure permanent contact with employees outside the structural visits;
 - discuss complaints received and give recommendations for resolving the problem;
 - monitor and evaluate whether established quotas are being met.
- The Ethics Committee will meet at least twice a year. Ad hoc meetings will be organised when urgent matters need to be discussed. In case of complaints concerning gender-based violence and sexual harassment, urgent meetings will be organised to ensure that the problem is dealt with as quickly as possible.

4. Complaint Box and Anonymous Forms

- A digital complaint box was created to allow employees to report problems at any time using anonymous forms. The forms are available on the organization's communication channels. Inclusive Europe will also print a QR code providing access to the forms and place it in the office. Employees will be able to fill out the forms and send them to the digital complaint box, avoiding direct contact with other colleagues and preserving anonymity.
- The complaints box will be directed and accessible exclusively to the members of the Ethics Committee.