

EELISA Alliance Statement on Gender Equality

As stated in the Governing Board Declaration last April 2021¹, the European Engineering Learning Innovation and Science Alliance, EELISA, was set up to promote an **educational model for European engineers and architects, that combines both technical competence and societal impact**. EELISA is also committed to strengthening the foundation of a **European society based on cooperation and sustainability**.

EELISA and its partner institutions would like to recall the statements made a year ago and **emphasise their commitment to the shared values of democracy, diversity, inclusion and gender equality** as the *conditio sine qua non* to achieve the aforementioned aims as well as to build the new European Education and Research Area. Gender equality contributes to the integrity and societal responsibility of research, leveraging scientific and technological quality to higher standards, namely through the gender dimension in research and innovation.

As pilot flagship projects, European University Alliances should set the example and pave the way for institutional transformations, including “strengthening human capital, enabling balanced brain circulation and gender balance”. Towards this aim, **individually committed to gender equality, EELISA partners have also put gender equality at the core of the work of the Alliance**. This is true since the inception of our Alliance, whose very acronym, EELISA, pays tribute to Elisa Zamfirescu, one of the very first women to obtain an engineering degree in the world.

In this context, the EELISA Alliance and its partner institutions:

- 1- Welcome the 2021 *Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation*², the *Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality France, the Czech Republic and Sweden 2022-2023*³ as well as the gender dimension in the *Council Conclusions of the Future Governance of the European Research Area (ERA)*⁴.
- 2- **Recognise that there are still persistent gender gaps in higher education as well as in research and innovation** (‘She figures’ report⁵), and in the labour market⁶. While at bachelor and master levels, women outnumber men as students and graduates, and while there is almost gender balance at the doctoral level, there are large gender differences across fields of study – in the STEM fields, women still represent slightly less than a third of students at bachelor and master levels, and 37% of doctoral candidates. Only 33% of Europe’s researchers are women (all fields), and they remain under-represented at the

¹ <https://eelisa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/EELISA-GovBoard-Declaration-proposal-April-19-2021.docx-1.pdf>

² <https://www.gov.si/assets/ministrstva/MIZS/Dokumenti/PSEU/Ljubljana-Declaration-on-Gender-Equality-in-Research-and-Innovation- endorsed final.pdf>

³ <https://www.government.se/490abc/contentassets/86aa35838076469dba3bed21be7d30b4/trio-presidency-declaration-on-gender-equality-france-the-czech-republic-and-sweden-2022-2023.pdf>

⁴ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/document/commission-communication-on-a-european-strategy-for-universities>

⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/67d5a207-4da1-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/women-labour-market-work-life-balance/womens-situation-labour-market_en

highest level of academia, with only 26% of full professorship positions held by women ('She figures' report⁷).

- 3- Recognise the negative economic impact of the gender employment gap. In fact, as highlighted in the OECD's data on gender equality⁸, the economic loss due to the gender employment gap amounts to €370 billion per year. Acting on this is both a social and an economic imperative. Improving gender equality could lead to an increase in GDP of up to €3.15 trillion by 2050.
- 4- Acknowledge that, according to the preliminary figures gathered for the production of the EELISA InnoCORE (EELISA INNOvation and COMmon REsearch Strategy), Gender Equality Plan and as declared by EELISA partners, similar imbalances seem to exist at some partner institutions, women still being underrepresented in specific academic and scientific fields as well as at the highest levels of our hierarchies.
- 5- Fully support the need to ensure fair, open, inclusive and gender-equal pay and career paths in higher education and research.

In order to address and correct existing inequalities, **EELISA and its partner institutions commit to implement correcting measures, to raise awareness and to promote mutual learning.** Particularly, EELISA partners recognise the importance of Gender Equality Plans as instruments for addressing and monitoring this issue. **As of April 2022, almost all EELISA partners have a Gender Equality Plan in place** and, under EELISA InnoCORE, EELISA is working on an EELISA Gender Equality Plan for the Alliance including a common set of gender equality indicators. EELISA partners will gather and track gender-disaggregated data that will allow to monitor and evaluate the situation at the Alliance level.

We underscore the importance of **promoting new role models and raising awareness** about existing gender imbalances in the areas of teaching, research and innovation. The round table 'Women who make science happen' on 11 February 2022, the 'International Day of Women and Girls in Science', kickstarted EELISA activities in this respect. Peer learning being a cornerstone of creating an Alliance, EELISA aims to develop and support stakeholders to share a common vision on equality and will **facilitate the exchange of experiences among its partners.**

EELISA commits

- a. to guarantee, as far as possible, gender balance regarding the composition of evaluation committees and to implement measures in accordance with a hiring process that is free of gender bias;
- b. to seek gender balance in the composition of panels and invited speakers when planning conferences, webinars, lectures or events;

⁷ <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/67d5a207-4da1-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1>

⁸ <https://www.oecd.org/gender/>

- c. to use gender-sensitive language, avoiding sexist language, gender-discriminatory language or gender-biased language.

To put these commitments into practice, EELISA is going to set up and implement several actions and instruments, including:

- a. Guidelines for the organization of EELISA events, conferences, etc., that consider gender issues (use of gender sensitive language, invitation of male and female speakers, ...);
- b. A workshop on the Gender Equality Plans of the Alliance members, in order to set in motion and simplify exchange and mutual learning;
- c. An inclusiveness forum, in order to provide a platform to share best practices on gender balance;
- d. A Massive Open Online Course on Women Leaders in Engineering;
- e. Communication campaigns that highlight the impact and commitment of women in science generally, and more particularly within the EELISA Alliance.

EELISA and its partners will work together closely to support the advancement of gender equality, which means working towards building the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), and towards a strong, democratic, inclusive, diverse and sustainable society.

Alliance members



In Association with

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