Joint Declaration on Gender Equality in Higher Education, Research and Innovation

As European institutions in higher education, research and innovation, and winners of the *EU Award for Gender Equality Champions*[1], we reaffirm our commitment to gender equality, in line with the Ljubljana Declaration (2021)[2]. Significant progress towards gender equality has been made in recent years, although inequalities persist and the gender dimension is still often overlooked in research contents. Key drivers of this progress are the mutual reinforcement of national and EU legal and policy frameworks with requirements to adopt and implement Gender Equality Plans at institutional level, as well as an increased awareness of gender inequalities and biases. The endorsement of gender equality policies by the top-level management of our institutions, along with dedicated efforts within the scientific community through gender equality plans (GEPs) to address structural and cultural inequalities through transparent hiring and promotion practices, promotion of role models through scientific recognition, gender-sensitive training, mentorship programmes, networking opportunities, and preventing and combating gender-based violence, has led to significant advancement. These efforts have had a very positive impact on key challenges such as ensuring equal career opportunities, addressing the gender pay gap, promoting gender balance in decision-making bodies, and improving work-life balance. We emphasise the need to develop gender equality policies that are inclusive and adopt an intersectional lens, recognising that gender-based inequalities intersect with discriminations based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, and sexual orientation.

Our commitment to gender equality goes far beyond the institutional level. It is a key element in our partnerships. In the framework of existing extensive scientific cooperation between European institutions in higher education, research and innovation, we aim to reinforce the sustainability of inclusive gender equality policies by sharing best practices and integrating joint actions, with the active support of the European Commission. Attracting more women to academic careers and ensuring the highest standards of research quality are essential to enhancing science's role in addressing societal and economic challenges. To achieve this, it is vital that we continue to mainstream gender equality in European and international cooperation.

International cooperation and mobility are essential, as scientific excellence has no borders. Our institutions have long-standing collaborations with many different countries outside Europe and many efforts have been made to increase the participation of women in such collaborations and provide equal opportunities. In today's context, science is more important than ever in addressing the global challenges facing our societies. Achieving inclusive gender equality in higher education, research and innovation is a key element in successfully addressing these challenges. We as European institutions in higher education, research and innovation will therefore continue to stand up for gender equality, which has produced demonstrably positive outcomes, including in international academic and scientific cooperation.

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1 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/prizes/eu-award-gender-equality-champions_en

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

Signatories:

CNRS: Antoine PETIT, CEO, Centre national de la recherche scientifique

CSIC: Eloísa DEL PINO MATUTE, President, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas

INSTRUCT-ERIC: Harald SCHWALBE, Director

KI: Annika ÖSTMAN WERNERSON, President, Karolinska Institutet

MU: Eeva LEINONEN, President, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

RCSI: Cathal KELLY, Vice Chancellor & CEO / Registrar, University of Medicine and Health Sciences

SETU: Veronica CAMPBELL, President of South East Technological University

TCD: Linda DOYLE, Provost and President, Trinity College Dublin

TUS: Vincent CUNNANE, President of Technological University of the Shannon

UG: Piotr STEPNOWSKI, Rector, Uniwersytet Gdański

URV: Josep PALLARÈS MARZAL, Rector, Rovira i Virgili University