



# RESET Joint statement on our engagement for equality, diversity and excellence in research



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# INTRODUCTION



We, the consortium of the partner universities involved in the European project RESET - Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together, are committed to promote and sustain gender equality, diversity and scientific excellence within our institutional environments.

In higher education and research, recent decades have been characterized by the dissemination of a narrow imperative focusing on scientific excellence alone. This has resulted in a growing debate on “excellence,” and how it often overlaps with the notion of elitism. In this context, academics have often been seen solely as competitors and “scientific entrepreneurs,” while other criteria such as the diversity of career pathways, working conditions and contextual challenges that academics face have been ignored. Scientific excellence does not depend on a set of quantitative criteria and requirements, but must also include qualitative, cultural and social dimensions.

The pressure related to the competition of institutions based on the primacy of quantitative criteria has provoked a general fatigue of university communities that must be healed. In this aspect, the collective contribution of university communities to the excellent results must be included in the evaluation of academic standing.



The objective of this declaration is to ensure that all research stakeholders can participate in the competition for excellence, regardless of their social characteristics. At the same time, it intends to widen the definition and the collective dimension of excellence at the institutional level, by valuing contribution of all members of the community, thereby widening the definition of excellence. This statement takes its roots in the principles of gender equality and diversity, according to which all individuals should have the same opportunities, regardless of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, nationality and ethnicity, the fact of having disability, their religion, social background or even culture.

With the help of an intersectional and co-designing perspective, we will focus on the evolution of career paths including elements related to work-life balance and access to decision-making. In conformity with Horizon Europe and national requirements, we will devote our efforts to the integration of gender dimension in research, and to the prevention of gender bias, stereotypes, discrimination and sexist and racist violence. As higher education institutions, we have a role to play not only in knowledge production, but also in its transfer at both administrative and scientific levels. We also aim at framing and implementing sustainable societal, gender- and diversity-responsible practices within our institutional environments, spreading values via networks, alliances, clusters and other types of partnerships. Hence, asserting equality and diversity in the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge is the major key to produce innovative, reflexive, impact-driven, societally relevant and inclusive content.



# 1

## GOVERNANCE

### **Strengthening our commitment to equality and diversity principles by reviewing our core texts and official guidelines**

We aim to highlight our institutional documents to reflect our common ambition for developing excellent research and innovation schemes. We aspire our institutions to be representatives of diversity, involvement, and quality of our communities.

### **Enhancing co-design and collaboration in the creation, development and monitoring of ideas and actions in favour of equality and diversity**

Our ambition is to include all relevant local stakeholders in the co-design of policies and innovative solutions, namely, into the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local inclusive Gender Equality Plans (GEP). Our will is also to encourage European alliances, international mobility networks and territorial innovation centres to participate in the promotion of an inclusive excellence culture.

### **Fostering diversity and equal representation in decision-making bodies and processes**

This engagement will be adapted to our contexts and requires long-term efforts: namely, regulation on the composition of boards and committees, training and communication activities tackling the issue of underrepresentation of women and other representatives of marginalized groups in decision-making bodies.

*The political and institutional support at the governance level is an essential condition for legitimating and highlighting significance of inclusion, societal impact and collective efforts within excellence.*



## **Promoting sustainable cultural change by establishing a gender and diversity-friendly environment**

As employers and service providers, we have a responsibility to ensure that both employees and users have a chance to work and/or study in an atmosphere of mutual respect, benevolence and sharing of common civic values. The way we communicate and act, along with our regulations must echo our engagement to build together inclusive excellent universities.

## **Using a way of communication that reflects the diversity of our environments**

Visual, oral and written communication is a powerful tool to share ideas and spread messages. It might affect the perception of legitimacy and the position of a person in society. Therefore, we aspire to be as transparent as possible, and promote diversity and non-discrimination practices via our communication channels.

## **Integrating gender mainstreaming in our policies**

In order to promote equality at all levels, our past, current and future policies should be analysed, monitored and updated taking into consideration their impact on gender equality.

## **Combating all forms of discrimination or gender-based violence within our institutions**

We engage ourselves to draw awareness to the issue, and to address and sanction any cases of discrimination or violence that could occur at our universities. Our position includes promotion of safety and equality in our living, working and virtual spaces.

*The promotion of equality and diversity within institutional culture is one of the first steps to ensure the efficiency of our actions. It will enable their endorsement and encourage structural change in accordance with sustainable model of development and innovation.*

# 3

# OCCUPATIONAL EQUALITY

## Ensuring equality of opportunities by refining recruitment, retention and decision-making processes

Building a professional career, progressing and finding a balance with one's personal life are the main domains in which inequalities are observable. Occupational equality is thus a lever for the development of a more inclusive society, in which individuals may emancipate and achieve excellent results despite their divergent social backgrounds or personal situations. Within the framework of RESET, we will encourage the creation and dissemination of tools for transparent and non-discriminatory processes and procedures of recruitment and career advancement.

## Reflecting on the impact of parenthood on careers and solutions to enable a work-life balance

Leaves linked with parenthood, a part-time job or a lack of time for research and personal life activities may be serious challenges to embrace while making a career. Along with promoting modern forms of parenting, the main ambition here is to ensure that having children does not present a barrier for the professional realization and achievement of excellent results. Higher Education Institutions, as employers, have to align with European and local legislation and provide necessary facilities.



# 3

# OCCUPATIONAL EQUALITY

## **Enhancing and valuing contribution of administrative and academic communities within European responsible research & innovation**

Research support positions often remain invisible and yet are essential to the development and outreach of scientific excellence. It is thus important to recognize the work and outputs of all communities involved in excellence making, as they contribute to the enrichment, blooming and development of our institutions at (inter-)national level and promote European research and innovation.

*Professional realization is still one of the fields in which gender inequalities remain the most visible in European countries. The process of providing employees and students with all elements necessary for fulfilment, dedication and growth should be carried out with respect to the balance between professional and personal life, since excellent results require excellent environments.*



# 4

# PRODUCTION & TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

## Developing training programs and pedagogical content that draw awareness to equality and diversity issues

The transversal notions of equality and diversity have to be included in the teaching and research content along with acknowledgement on bias, stereotypes and prejudices in professional practices. In this way, students and employees will be equipped with concrete tools. It is also a manner to highlight everyone's responsibility for the construction of a more inclusive society.

## Promoting integration of gender dimension in research through the implementation of the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) tool of RESET

The requirements of the Horizon Europe programme on integrating gender dimension in research highlight the need for alignment between science development and contemporary societal challenges. The respect of GIA, research integrity and multidisciplinary is a conceptual and operational basis for responsible research and innovation and excellent research outputs.





# 4

# PRODUCTION & TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

## Developing societal dimensions of research & innovation

We intend to promote accessible science and produce sustainable innovation, challenge established knowledge, and reach out to a large number of users. This objective is set in the context of the progressive opening of data and scientific results. In the aim of developing responsible research & innovation – and in accordance with the European strategy for inclusive and sustainable growth, we will promote open access, gender equality and respect of ethics and research integrity.

*In order to keep scientific excellence societally relevant and impact-driven, it is paramount to take into consideration social inequalities that rule over human relationships and influence knowledge. Science is a solution to reduce inequalities, and to do so, it must be enriched by considering diversity in all disciplines, methodologies and contributions. Scientific and academic excellence should be taken as the results of collective efforts, valuing the participation of all stakeholders. The transformations to be carried out within the framework of RESET and seven partner universities aim to be facilitated by the broadening of the criteria of scientific excellence, emphasising intersectionality, performance and research integrity in an inclusive and rewarding perspective.*

## Signatories



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