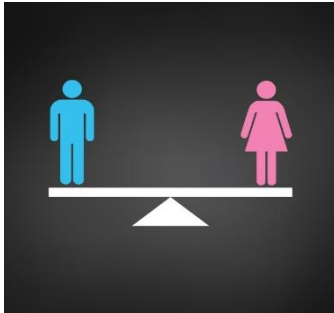




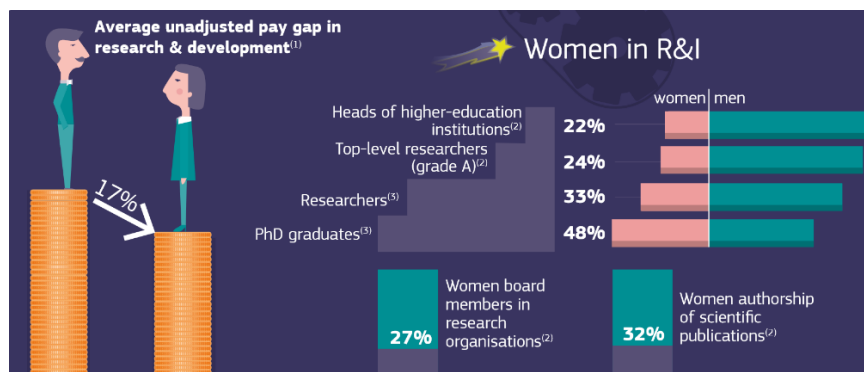
ENRF Briefing Note on “Gender equality in R&I means more nurses in R&I”



Over the last years, the EU has made significant progress in gender equality through equal treatment legislation; gender mainstreaming, integration of the gender perspective into all other policies; and specific measures for the advancement of women. However, gender gaps remain and in the labour market women are still over-represented in lower paid sectors and under-represented in decision-making positions.

Taking this further, the European Commission is committed to promote gender equality in research and innovation. With its [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#) the European Commission defines a stronger commitment to reach “a Union of Equality” with equality in all EU policies. The **key objective is to** end gender-based violence; challenge gender stereotypes; close gender gaps in the labour market; achieve equal participation across different sectors of the economy; address the gender pay and pension gaps; and close the gender care gap and have a gender balance in decision-making and in politics.

The EU [2021 Report on Gender Equality](#), published in March 2021 (the first under the new Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025), provides an overview on where the EU and its Member States are in terms of gender equality, highlighting the EU’s achievements in five key areas covered by the strategy (1. Being free from violence and stereotypes, 2. Thriving in a gender equal economy, 3. Leading equally throughout society, 4. Gender mainstreaming and funding, 5. Promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment across the world) and providing examples from the EU Member States and EU-funded projects in these areas.



Regarding the **research and innovation sector**, the European Commission identified some barriers which hinder the overcome of the gender gap, and the need to implement the [EU gender equality objectives](#), namely:

- More women participating in research and innovation programmes
- Better integrate the gender dimension in the content of research and innovation projects
- More participation of EU widening countries in actions dedicated to gender equality in research and innovation organisations
- Broader gender equality policies in research and innovation to intersections with other potential grounds for discrimination such as ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation

The **main tools** that the European Commission decided to use to get over the problem of gender inequality are:

- › [Horizon Europe](#) - the new framework programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027)
- › The [European Research Area \(ERA\)](#) - in collaboration with Member States and research organisations

Horizon Europe, as funding instrument, becomes an important tool to reach gender equality in research and innovation and to overcome the barriers, with ‘gender equality’ as part of the eligibility criteria for public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments applying for the programme. This confirms the European Commission commitment in achieving gender equality, making this topic a priority in its policy agenda. **Specific funding**

will be allocated to sustain and promote inclusive policies for **the emancipation of innovative women**. The main objective is to improve the European innovation system by promoting gender equality in the workplace so that this equality can be reflected in the **quality of research** and the **development of new technologies** and innovations produced. In "[Gender Equality: a strengthened commitment in Horizon Europe](#)" it is possible to consult the key new provisions.

For the **European Research Area (ERA)**, that aims to create a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology across the EU, gender equality will also be priority. In the ERA Communication 2012 Framework, the European Commission was already defining 3 main purposes to implement, with the EU Member States, a real institutional change:

1. **Gender Equality** in scientific careers.
2. **Gender balance** in decision making.
3. Integration of the **gender dimension** in research and innovation.

Through [Horizon 2020](#), the first framework programme to set gender as a cross-cutting issue, the European Commission was already aiming to support countries and research organisations to develop national actions to encourage and implement Gender Equality Plans (GEP). However, despite the progress achieved, the barriers to gender equality in research and innovation organisations are still present, as defined by [ERA Progress Report](#) and [She Figures](#):

- Only 24% of women are in top academic positions
- Few women are in STEM fields
- Less than 10% of women are patent holders

Therefore, a lot is still to be done to reach gender equality all over the EU Member States.

Other fundamental issues that need to be addressed relate to **gender-based violence** and problems of **inclusiveness** (ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability). The recent communication on the European Research Area includes a common action between the EU, EU countries and countries associated with Horizon 2020, to strengthen gender equality provisions. The [Action 12](#) urges EU and EU countries to implement plans to promote gender equality, diversity, and inclusiveness in science, research, and innovation.

Moreover, during the Corona Virus pandemic, the scientific community paid more attention to the different effects that impacted men and women. [The Lancet](#) and the [European Institute for Gender Equality](#) highlight issues as:

- clinical sex and gender differences in responses to the virus
- mortality rates
- clinical trials and side effects to different drugs and vaccines
- impact on domestic and gender-based violence
- impact on reproductive health and rights
- impact on the healthcare and caregiving professions, which are occupied by women at 76%
- work-life balance and economic equality.

From its side, and building on this reality, the European Commission published [initiatives and projects related to gender equality and coronavirus](#).

In conclusion, Gender Equality is a duty and a benefit for all in every field. In research and innovation, gender equality can allow to improve research quality and outcomes. It needs to create a society in which women and men are equal, in which there is not unequal treatment. Lots of women are nurses and more women in research and innovation means more nurses in research and innovation. It is therefore time to act and get involved in this debate/development.

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European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF)
Registration Number : 0533.978.961
Clos du Parnasse 11B, 1050 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 511 34 84 - Fax: +32 2 512 35 50
Email: enrf@enrf.eu – Web: www.enrf.eu