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Α.Π.: 146877
Ηράκλειο, 10.07.2024

Θέμα: Αίτημα υποστήριξης πρότασης για «Πρόγραμμα για Γυναίκες Ερευνήτριες/Καθηγήτριες» στα ΕΚ και ΑΕΙ της χώρας

Αξιότιμη Κυρία Υφυπουργέ,

Αξιότιμη Κυρία Γενική Γραμματέα, Αξιότιμοι Κύριοι Γενικοί Γραμματείς,

Με την παρούσα επιστολή, ζητάμε την υποστήριξή σας για την έναρξη συζήτησης και προώθησης ενός προγράμματος για Γυναίκες Ερευνήτριες/Καθηγήτριες στα Ερευνητικά Κέντρα (ΕΚ) και ΑΕΙ της Χώρας, το οποίο εμπνεύστηκε και επιμελήθηκε ο Καθηγητής Αλέξανδρος Σταματάκης (ένας από τους υπογράφοντες), κάτοχος έδρας ERA (ERA Chair) στο Ίδρυμα Τεχνολογίας & Έρευνας (ΙΤΕ), ως μέρος των μεταρρυθμίσεων στον ερευνητικό και ακαδημαϊκό χώρο της Ελλάδας, τις οποίες είχε προτείνει στο πλαίσιο του έργου του ως ERA Chair.

Η πρόταση μεταρρυθμίσεων αποτελεί θεσμική υποχρέωση των ERA Chairs προς την ΕΕ. Η πρόταση, που επισυνάπτεται, συζητήθηκε και εμπλουτίστηκε περαιτέρω από την Επιτροπή Ισότητας και Καταπολέμησης των Διακρίσεων (ΕΙΦΚΔ) του ΙΤΕ και Μέλη της ερευνητικής κοινότητας του ΙΤΕ, του Πανεπιστημίου Κρήτης, του Ελληνικού Κέντρου Θαλασσίων ερευνών (ΕΛΚΕΘΕ), του Ερευνητικού Κέντρου Βιοϊατρικών Ερευνών «Αλέξανδρος Φλέμινγκ», του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης, και του Παντείου Πανεπιστημίου, που αναφέρονται στο τέλος της πρότασης. Επίσης, με πρωτοβουλία της ΕΙΦΚΔ ΙΤΕ, η πρόταση συζητήθηκε και από τις ΕΙΦΚΔ των Δικτύων ΕΙΦΚΔ ΑΕΙ και ΕΚ/ΕΙ, φέροντας την υποστήριξή τους για να σας προωθηθεί προκειμένου να βρεθούν τρόποι εφαρμογής του προγράμματος.

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Το προτεινόμενο πρόγραμμα στοχεύει να δώσει μία λύση για την αντιμετώπιση του μικρού λόγου γυναικών σε θέση Ερευνητριών/Καθηγητριών, ιδίως στις μεγαλύτερες βαθμίδες, καθώς και πρωτίστως σε θέσεις ευθύνης εντός των ακαδημαϊκών και ερευνητικών ιδρυμάτων της Χώρας. Έχει στηριχτεί εν μέρει σε αντίστοιχα προγράμματα για γυναίκες ή άλλες μειονότητες σε χώρες της Ευρώπης και στις ΗΠΑ. Έχουν ενσωματωθεί χαρακτηριστικά του ελληνικού ερευνητικού και ακαδημαϊκού γίγνεσθαι και έχει γίνει προσπάθεια να είναι όσο πιο απλό στην εφαρμογή του ώστε να μπορέσει και να είναι επιτυχημένο.

Θα θέλαμε να ζητήσουμε να μελετήσετε την πρότασή μας και να μας δώσετε τη δυνατότητα να σας την παρουσιάσουμε και συζητήσουμε μαζί σας, διερευνώντας τους καλύτερους τρόπους για να μπορέσει να προωθηθεί η εφαρμογή αυτού του προγράμματος.

Σας ευχαριστούμε εκ των προτέρων για την προσοχή σας.

Με ιδιαίτερη εκτίμηση,

Ν. Ταβερναράκης

Νεκτάριος Ταβερναράκης

Πρόεδρος Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου &

Διευθυντής Κεντρικής Διεύθυνσης ΙΤΕ

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Μαρία Ι. Κλάπα

Διευθύντρια Ερευνών ΙΤΕ/ΙΕΧΜΗ, Πρόεδρος ΕΙΦΚΔ ΙΤΕ

Why does Greece need a dedicated female professors/researchers program?

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Status quo: Through strategic planning, the European Union's commitment to advance gender equality within the Research and Innovation (R&I) sector has achieved some important milestones including near gender parity at the doctoral level[1] (EU, 2021). Yet, the underrepresentation of women, particularly in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workforce is a persistent phenomenon that transcends national boundaries.

Furthermore, at every step of the career ladder, women leave in higher numbers and occupy fewer senior and decision-making positions than their male counterparts. This *leaky pipeline* highlights a major shortcoming in building inclusive work environments. Among all EU member states, Greece currently has the lowest Gender Equality Index (GEI), with particularly low rankings regarding the participation of women in leadership positions and work-life balance [2]. We cite from the gender equality plan of the University of Crete[3]:

> *Despite the legislative provisions, our country has not achieved the corresponding outcomes. According to the Women, Peace and Security Index recently published by the Georgetown Institute for Women[4], Peace and Security (GIWPS) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Greece is ranked 45th out of 170 countries that participated in the research, and last in the group of developed countries. The worst performance is noted in employment and financial inclusion.*

Further, according the *Top Universities for Gender Equality 2023 study*, only the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) ranks 9th among the top 100[5] with the remaining Greek Universities falling far behind[6]. While the gender equality situation in research[7] is not as dramatic as for general Gender Equality, the proportion of women among heads of institutions among higher education institutions is still the fourth lowest in the EU.

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1 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/publications/all-publications/she-figures-2021_en

2 https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/compare-countries

3 https://en.uoc.gr/files/items/7/7593/gender_equality_plan.pdf

4 https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/greece/

5 https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/top-universities-tackling-gender-equality

6 https://www.timeshighereducation.com/rankings/impact/2023/gender-equality#!/length/25/locations/GRC/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/undefined

7 https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/knowledge-publications-tools-and-data/interactive-reports/she-figures-2021

This is also reflected by the pronounced gender bias in university and research center management bodies (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Table 1: Rectorate gender composition of top 10 Greek universities according to the Times Higher Education index[8] (web sites accessed on June 15 2023). Approximately 30% of the rectors are female while only 17% of the rectorate members are female. While the proportion of female rectors is analogous to Germany (28.6%), female rectorate members account for 37% in Germany[9].

NKUA:	1 Rector + 4 vice rectors (all male)
UoC:	1 Rector + 4 vice rectors (all male)
HUA:	1 Rector (female) + 1 vice rector (male)[10]
AUTH:	1 Rector + 4 vice rectors (all male)
AUEB:	1 Rector + 4 vice rectors - all male
NTUA:	1 Rector + 3 vice rectors (all male)
UoI:	1 Rector (female) + 4 vice rectors (one female)
Aegean:	1 Rector (female) + 2 vice rectors (one female)
Uth:	1 Rector + 4 vice rectors (one female)
UPatras:	1 Rector + 4 vice rectors (all male)

Table 2: Board of directors gender composition of the 11 Greek research centers that are directly attached to the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (websites accessed on 05/09/23). The proportion of women in the directorial boards amounts to 24% only.

FORTH:	Chairperson[11] male	+ 10 members (2 female)
CERTH:	Chairperson male	+ 8 members (1 female)
HCMR:	Chairperson male	+ 5 members (1 female)
BSRC:	Chairperson male	+ 6 members (2 female)
Demokritos:	Chairperson male	+ 8 members (2 female)
ATHENA:	Chairperson male	+ 5 members (2 female)
BRFAA:	Chairperson male	+ 5 members (0 female)
HPI:	Chairperson female	+ 2 members (2 female)
NHRF:	Chairperson male	+ 6 members (2 female)
NOA:	Chairperson male	+ 6 members (2 female)
EKKE:	Chairperson female	+ 5 members (1 female)

[8] https://www.mastersportal.com/ranking-country/25/greece.html

[9] https://www.che.de/2023/frauenanteil-bei-staatlichen-hochschulleitungen-in-deutschland-steigt-weiter-an/

[10] other vice rectors not appointed yet

[11] The official term is Chairman on the respective web-site, but we replaced this by Chairperson for using a more gender-neutral language

Moreover, there is increasing pressure by the EU to take positive action on gender issues. The European Commission already imposed upon all European public bodies requesting European funding to establish gender equality plans by the end of 2022. Thus, not acting now might induce competitive disadvantages for Greece, for instance, when competing for EU research funding.

Finally, net national research funding is still substantially below the EU average[12] which further justifies the additional expenditure on net research funding that we propose below.

Proposal: To improve the competitiveness of Greece and to simultaneously address the three aforementioned issues, that is (i) the lowest GEI in the EU, (ii) the substantial under-representation of women in academic/research management bodies, and (iii) the low national expenditure for research, we, the undersigned, propose the development of a dedicated program for increasing the number of permanent state-appointed and exclusively female researchers as well as professors at Rank B and A positions, that is, associate and full professors in Universities as well as Principal Researchers and Research Directors at the 11 Research Centers directly attached to GSRI (General Secretariat of Research and Innovation). Ideally, this should be extended to other Research Centers attached to distinct ministries and also those embedded into universities (i.e. all research entities in Greece that host state-financed Principal Researcher and Research Director positions). We propose a focus on Rank A and B positions, where the problem is most pronounced (so-called glass ceiling effect or leaky pipeline effect[13]), because scientists appointed to these positions are eligible for **all** academic management positions and thus an increased female representation in these bodies will more rapidly be achieved. It is worth noting that there also appears to exist a promotion gap, for instance, according to the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of Patras University it takes women on average two years longer (see p.13 of U. Patras GEP[14]) to be promoted to the next rank. Finally, Greek national law 2839/2000, article 6, requires that at least one third of the members of governing bodies/committees should be female.

A UNESCO policy brief[15] provides a good overview over the general policies that can be implemented to support gender equality within higher education institutions. In the following, we will briefly review analogous programs in other, mostly European countries, with substantially more favorable GEIs.

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12 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/2/26/Gross_domestic_expenditure_on_R_and_D%2C_2011_and_2021_%28%25%2C_relative_to_GDP%29_04-10-2022.png

13 This is very prevalent in the 2017 self-evaluation conducted by all FORTH institutes where a substantial imbalance between female scientist proportions was observed between the PostDoc population at FORTH and the researcher and collaborating faculty population. The, yet unpublished, 2023 report shows that the situation has remained unaltered.

14 https://isotita.upatras.gr/wp-content/uploads/sites/117/2022/06/%CE%A3%CE%94%CE%99%CE%A6-%CE%A0%CE%A0_v3.12_final.pdf

15 https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2023/03/08/effective-policy-approaches-to-bridge-the-gender-gap-in-academia/

The Professorinnenprogramm[16] (female professors program) initiated by the **German** Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF) in 2007 has attained substantial impact[17].
The **Norwegian** 2002 Gender Equality Act required that women represent at least 40% of the executive board members in universities which resulted in an increase of female academic staff from 35% in 2000 to 48% in 2020, and from 8% to 25% of the country's full professors over the same period[18].
Since 2009 **Austria** requires university bodies and commissions to comprise 40% female members. The quota was raised to 50% in 2014. By 2016 all, but one, university council complied with this quota[19].
In **Colombia**, the government implemented a quota in 2010 requiring that women attain at least 30% of top decision-making positions in public administration, including public universities[20].
There also exist examples for dedicated programs to promote women in business positions in **Spain**[21] and **Portugal**[22]. We provide further country-specific examples in the Appendix of this document.

Implementation: Every year, a certain number *X* (the higher this number *X*, the better) of dedicated, **in addition to** the already planned standard positions, researcher/professor positions is created that must be filled by female scientists. This restriction to female scientists might be put into question by some, but we propose to implement it as a positive action measure following the example of multiple European countries as well as the U.S. To avoid potential conflicts and unnecessary grant writing as well as reviewing, the following simple procedure shall be implemented:

1. Assume that 12 female professor positions are available in one calendar and that analogously 12 female researcher positions are available for the Research Centers (i.e. *X:=24* in our example).
2. They get assigned to 12 out of the 24 Greek universities; analogously for Research Centers according to a government plan. Such a plan can include those Research Centers (as legal entities) where the number of female researchers at *all* ranks *and* across all institutes is below 40%. This 40% cutoff constitutes a typical threshold for taking positive action. The number of allocated female researcher positions per center might also be scaled relative to the respective research size in terms of number of overall researchers at all ranks. In case there are less positions available

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16 https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/forschung/gleichstellung-und-vielfalt-im-wissenschaftssystem/frauen-im-wissenschaftssystem/das-professorinnenprogramm.html

17 https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/forschung/gleichstellung-und-vielfalt-im-wissenschaftssystem/frauen-im-wissenschaftssystem/das-professorinnenprogramm.html

18 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/23322969.2022.2066014

19 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381739

20 https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2023/03/08/effective-policy-approaches-to-bridge-the-gender-gap-in-academia/

21 https://proyectopromociona.com/#inicio

22 https://eeagrants.org/news/women-leadership-how-promova-balancing-power

per year than Research Centers/Universities the respective RCs/Universities will be selected at random.

3. At the respective Universities/Research Centers, the positions are directly allocated to the University Departments/Research Center Institutes with the lowest gender balance (counting Rank A-C positions in the Department/Institute) at a particular point in time specified by the government. We suggest that the gender balance is calculated taking all professor/researcher ranks into account, as there is mobility among levels within Departments/Institutes. This procedure predominantly strengthens institutes and departments in the STEM area where women are typically under-represented.
4. In the following calendar year, another 24 positions in total get allocated to the Universities/ Research Centers that did not receive such a position in the previous year(s) etc. This shall be budgeted for a government period of 4 years.

Ideally, each university and each research center should receive (at least) one such position per calendar year. We wish to emphasize that this simple procedure allows to steadily increase the number of female researchers in disciplines (institutes) where they are needed most, for instance, as role models for early career scientists. This will contribute to attracting more female scientists in academic and research positions and thereby alleviate the gender balance problem at the early career stage as well.

To circumvent potential discussions about bias and lack of excellence for positions to be exclusively filled by female researchers, we suggest that the position descriptions (*γνωστικο αντικειμενο*) should be as broad as legally possible, albeit we are aware of the fact that this can only be recommended yet not imposed upon Research Centers/Universities.

A key issue to resolve, predominantly for Research Centers, consists in devising a fair distribution of these positions given the substantial variation in Research Center sizes (e.g. centers with 2-3 institutes versus FORTH with its 10 institutes) and gender ratios as a function of the thematic focus. To resolve the size issue, positions could be distributed in proportion to the total number of rank A, B, and C researchers per research center. However, the large universities may subsequently also request such a proportional assignment. Finally, we must consider the case that there exist no institutes within a Research Center with an unfavorable gender balance as is currently the case at the Pasteur institute (HPI) where the vast majority of researchers are female. In this rare case, the Research Center will nonetheless receive a position from the program, but the restriction that it shall only be allocated to female researchers will be lifted. This still contributes to the goal (iii) stated above, that is, to increase national research expenditure.

While this proposal was initiated by an ERA Chair project hosted by FORTH and supported by the FORTH Administration, Gender Equality Committee, and Researcher Community, we wish to emphasize that our intention is to establish a comprehensive national program including ***all*** Universities and Research Centers.

Looking Ahead - Potential Additional Actions: Beyond the above basic proposal, we also suggest that additional funding schemes for capacity building and support measures of gender action plans are implemented. For instance, short stays at institutions outside Greece that have implemented particularly successful gender action plans, or hiring experts

who support the design of appropriate policies via a participatory approach. Thereby, a larger impact can be achieved, as more institutions might engage in a more comprehensive process of change. Funding of educational programs/workshops on inclusivity and work-life balance, inclusion of gender dimension in research, should be regularly allocated.
One key to achieving the above consists in fostering a substantial participation of female staff members at all hierarchical levels to identify the true underlying causes of the *leaky pipeline*. Further, tangible indicators stretching beyond counting heads or efforts to invite more women to apply for positions etc. need to be deployed. Evidently, such measures also need to address working conditions, flexibility, part-time, reintegration after parental leave, supporting fathers to fully use their parental leave, and reducing the proportion of male-dominated committees (albeit we are aware of the danger of increased committee work for female researchers especially in the STEM disciplines induced by such requirements). Implementing these measures requires working time and funding, hence funding such measures should be supported as well.
The implementation of specific action plans (e.g., pregnancy-friendly funding for female researchers/PostDocs/students, family-friendly funding for male and female researchers/PostDocs/students, or dedicated programs at schools to yield computer science more appealing to female students) should also receive additional competitive funding.
Looking ahead, there is a need for an academic and organizational culture that embraces diversity and promotes respective training and awareness. It shall advance inclusion beyond gender (e.g., enhance the visibility and acceptance of LGBTQ) and foster minority leadership representation.

Appendix

Constitutional Issues

Some concerns were raised whether opening dedicated positions only for women is compliant with the Greek constitution. Our perception is that this does not constitute an issue since it represents a positive action based on article 116 (“Άρθρο 116: Θετικά μέτρα για την προώθηση της ισότητας ανδρών – γυναικών”) paragraph 2 of the Greek constitution which states:

> *2. Δεν αποτελεί διάκριση λόγω φύλου η λήψη θετικών μέτρων για την προώθηση της ισότητας μεταξύ ανδρών και γυναικών. Το Κράτος μεριμνά για την άρση των ανισοτήτων που υφίστανται στην πράξη, ιδίως σε βάρος των γυναικών.*

Thus, the state needs to take action in favor of the underrepresented gender, especially for women (positive action “το κρατος μεριμνά για την άρση των ανισοτήτων που υφίστανται στην πράξη, ιδίως σε βάρος των γυναικών”). One such example is the required 40% representation of women on election ballot papers/lists.

Further Country-specific examples

In **France**, at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, essentially the network of national stat-funded research centers) it is the “Mission pour la place des femmes” (“mission for the position of women”) observatory which was created in 2001 to ensure that equality is respected. They started by publishing data on gender balance, and organized 3 to 5 year action plans over the past 20 years already. In brief, thanks to these actions, the

Research Director positions allocated to women (equivalent to A grade in Greece) increased from 20.7% in 2001 to 30.6% in 2021 and up to 45.2% in biology in positions that are equivalent to grade B In Greece.
A point worth noting is that the observatory appoints and trains a person that is responsible for implementing these action plans at each regional CNRS delegation (essentially a regional unit). They received substantial funding from the French Ministry of Research to implement these actions. The current 2021-2023 action plan[23] and the 20 year impact[24] are available on-line.

In **Spain**, at the CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Superior scientific research council) it is the “commisíon de Mujeres y Ciencia" ("commission for women and science”) that has assumed the role monitoring, publishing, and recommending the evolution of gender equality data since 2001. Within 20 years, the Glass Ceiling Index (GCI) was reduced by half, albeit in recent years it has remained stagnant. Respective data[25] are available on-line as well.

In the **UK**, the main Research centers (e.g., British council, Royal Society, UKRI (UK Research and innovation), etc.) need to comply with the regulatory act for Gender Equality (2014) to obtain funding. In short, each fund/grant request must comprise a paragraph which outlines the measures taken by the research center to ensure a fair recruitment process (best practice standard). Measures are also in place to monitor the impact of these measures[26,27].

Research Center Position Allocation Procedure

It is not entirely clear yet how to count and assign positions for research centers, see the (slightly edited for better readability) comment by Maria Klapa below:

> *For research centers it is a little bit trickier as 11 are the main ones funded by GSRT, but there are now many located within Universities and under other Ministries. We could start with the 13 in the Research Center Gender Equality Committee Network which are functioning in analogous manners. Overall, it is a little tricky (we will need some help from government officials on how to formulate it) because the size of these research centers also varies substantially. For instance, for a single Institute research center, one researcher per year represents a big fraction of the faculty, while in larger ones this will be smaller. We will attempt to formulate this in a reasonable and legitimate way.*

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[23] https://www.cnrs.fr/fr/cnrsinfo/plan-daction-pour-legalite-professionnelle-du-cnrs
[24] https://mpdf.cnrs.fr/mpdf/les-20-ans-de-la-mission/
[25] https://mujeresconciencia.com/2022/07/22/informe-mujeres-investigadoras-csic-2022/

[26] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gender-equality-in-research-and-innovation-official-development-assistance-oda

[27] https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-020920-EDI-EvidenceReviewUK.pdf

Signatories

Research Centers GEC network
Universities GEC network