



# Approaches to inclusive gender equality in research and innovation (R&I)



Research and  
Innovation

## Approaches to inclusive gender equality in research and innovation (R&I)

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The background of the page features several overlapping, light blue, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and flow. These lines are positioned behind the main title text.

APPROACHES TO  
**INCLUSIVE GENDER EQUALITY  
IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
(R&I)**

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## FOREWORD

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*Equality and non-discrimination are EU values enshrined in the Treaties. Higher education, research and innovation are no exception to this. Within the European Research Area (ERA), we want to enable all talents to reach their fullest potential so they can contribute to groundbreaking research and innovation (R&I), regardless of their personal or social background. This is underlined in the EU Pact for R&I, which sets gender equality and equal opportunities for all as one of its core principles.*

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The idea that a successful career in R&I is only the merit of hard work and motivation neglects underlying systemic barriers and biases that privilege some groups of people over others. For example, women remain underrepresented in fields like engineering and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), as well as at the highest levels of academia and in decision-making positions. This report also highlights additional disadvantages that ethnic minorities, migrants, LGBTIQ+ people, persons with disabilities, and persons from low-income backgrounds face. When these characteristics intersect, the hurdles for entering and advancing in R&I careers become even bigger.

Ensuring equality and inclusiveness is not only a matter of social justice, it is also paramount to increase the competitiveness and societal relevance of R&I – diverse teams produce better results and better reflect the needs and perspectives of diverse groups in R&I outputs. Equal and inclusive workspaces, which are free of harassment and discrimination, also strengthen EU R&I systems in the long run and help attract and retain talent from all over the world.



While gender equality is a longstanding priority in the ERA, Member States are increasingly calling for an intersectional approach, which considers intersections between gender and other social characteristics like ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. It is my ambition to build an inclusive ERA through the development of inclusive gender equality plans and policies together with the Member States and stakeholders. Gender equality plans are already a key instrument for driving institutional change in R&I organisations, especially now that they have become an eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe applicants. By promoting inclusive gender equality, we aim to ensure that our R&I policies benefit researchers, students and staff in all their diversity.

This report provides first insights into the emerging practices and policies at the EU and national levels for promoting inclusive gender equality and fostering equal opportunities for ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees, LGBTIQ+ persons and persons with disabilities in R&I systems.

The [ERA4Ukraine](#) initiative, which supports researchers fleeing the war in Ukraine, is already one great example of making EU R&I more accessible and inclusive, but our work does not stop here. I call on all Member States, R&I decision-makers and stakeholders to feel inspired by the many good practices and recommendations in this report and become the drivers of structural and cultural change towards equal, fairer and more inclusive R&I systems.

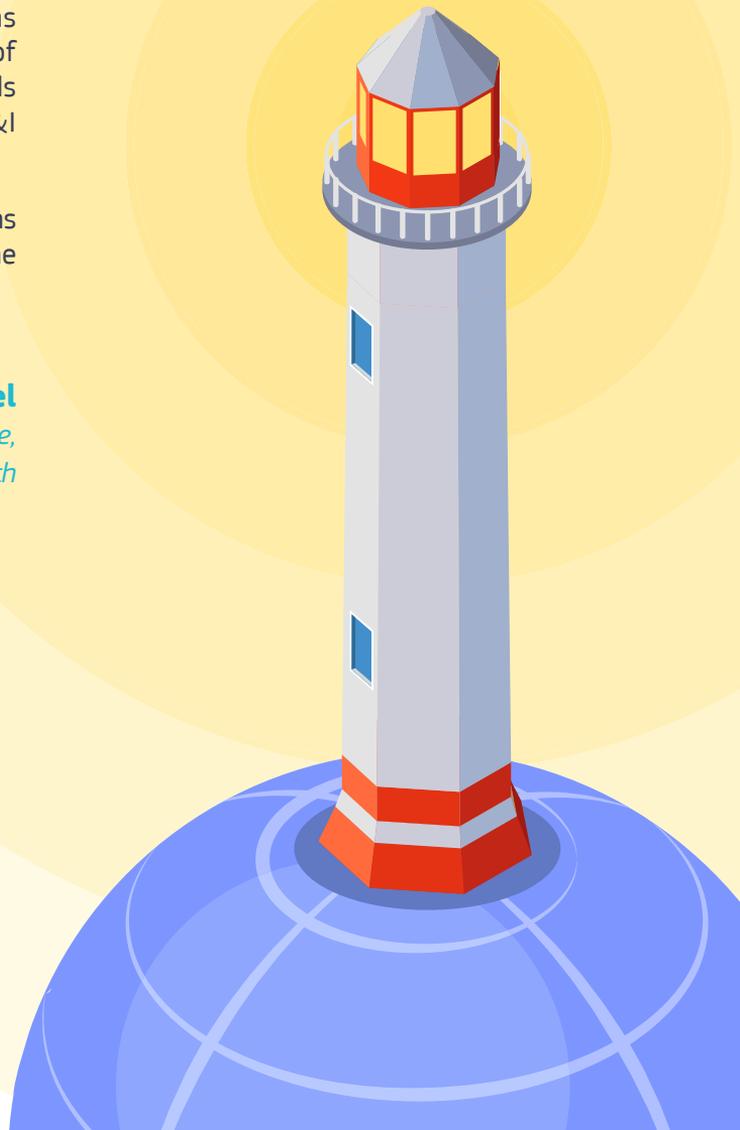
Let us build on our gender equality actions to support a truly diverse talent pipeline and unleash the full potential of the ERA!

**Mariya Gabriel**

*Innovation, Research, Culture,  
Education and Youth*



*Ensuring equality and inclusiveness is not only a matter of social justice, it is also paramount to increase the competitiveness and societal relevance of R&I.*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from the project “External expertise to support the development of inclusive gender equality in research and innovation (R&I) strategy and contribution to the European Commission Task Force for Equality”. It aims to guide European Commission work with Member States and stakeholders supporting the development of inclusive gender equality plans and policies in R&I. This work takes place in the context of the Union of Equality, including the European Union’s Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2021 and the Communication ‘A new ERA for Research and Innovation’<sup>2</sup>, which reaffirmed the European Union’s commitment to gender equality in R&I and the need to address intersections with other social categories, such as ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation.



Findings are based on a mapping of relevant actions that are being developed by national authorities, research funding organisations (RFOs), and research performing organisations (RPOs). It finds that European R&I organisations are beginning to develop relevant actions in the context of persistent gender inequalities and inequalities based on race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and disability. Actions to support inclusion of marginalised groups take place in the context of European and national policy agendas and legal frameworks that aim to:

- Prevent discrimination and promote social inclusion in society.
- Enhance the economic and social impact and relevance of research outputs.
- Expand and diversify the R&I workforce in a competitive global landscape.
- Support the social dimension of higher education.

The work takes place in the context of ongoing action to promote gender equality. This inequality is demonstrated through measures to collect data, including quantitative and qualitative data, on gender equalities at the European and national levels and by RFOs and RPOs<sup>3</sup>. However, data on the experiences of marginalised groups in European R&I is comparatively limited, with only a small number of national systems and R&I organisations collecting data. However, findings from available research, as well as the actions being taken by organisations, signal several persistent equality challenges, such as:

- Structural inequalities and unconscious biases that affect the progress of socially disadvantaged groups into senior research positions.
- The transition from higher education into research careers, particularly for students from minority ethnic or ‘migrant’ backgrounds.
- Harassment and bullying in research settings, which can particularly affect researchers from stigmatised backgrounds.
- Inflexible working practices and expectations that can disadvantage researchers from different backgrounds, including those with a disability or dependent care responsibilities.
- Reluctance to disclose personal characteristics and experiences of discrimination for fear of being disadvantaged in a competitive research labour market.

1 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

2 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A new ERA for Research and Innovation COM/2020/628 final.

3 Most notably, the [She Figures](#) publication, released every three years, is the main source of pan European, comparable statistics on the state of gender equality in research and innovation.

The mapping of current and emerging actions demonstrates that in Europe actions that address characteristics other than gender are in the early stages of development. Nevertheless, there are examples of organisations in Europe and internationally that are developing structural approaches to equality that build on existing gender equality actions to address inequalities and discrimination based on other characteristics. Most actions aim to take a more nuanced view of identity and discrimination, and many aim to address the intersections between discrimination and the specific vectors of discrimination for different groups. Common approaches are measures that aim to encourage and celebrate diversity of identities and cultures and ensure that environments are inclusive for all. In addition, there are also examples of concrete measures to promote equality, including review of policies and practices by funding bodies and RPOs to ensure that specific groups are not disadvantaged or discriminated against.

Based on the review of emerging activity, a key challenge for the promotion of inclusive gender equality plans and policies in European R&I will be to raise awareness and understanding of equality and diversity challenges in relation to different characteristics. A growing community of RPOs and RFOs and some national authorities clearly acknowledge the need to take broader action that builds on existing gender equality policies and actions. However, a challenge facing many of these organisations is the need to **translate general commitments to diversity and inclusion into practical actions** that promote equality for minority groups in research careers, organisations, and settings. Key steps will include developing an evidence-based approach to understand patterns of inequality in European R&I and developing systematic approaches to change that engage relevant stakeholders at the European and Member State level. Also crucial to the success of any action will be securing the trust of minority groups as part of any measures, including encouraging disclosure of experiences of discrimination and developing interventions that help to diversify the R&I workforce as part of structural reforms and organisational change.

The experiences of minority groups, including in different national contexts, are diverse but common principles for European R&I can help to guide meaningful action. Accordingly, policy makers and European R&I organisations should consider undertaking audits of their policies and actions and consider how inclusive approaches to gender equality may be embedded into their work, including where action in relation to specific minority groups may be required. Areas to consider through an audit or review of policies and action plans include:

- Enhancing equality data and understanding of the experiences and outcomes of staff and students from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensuring that harassment and behaviour policies address different forms of harassment and that all staff and students have confidence to report experiences.
- Providing impactful equality, diversity and inclusion training for staff and students as part of broader efforts to embed inclusive organisational cultures and practices.
- Reviewing recruitment and HR policies for biases and proactive measures to diversify applications, recruitment and retention, including at senior levels.
- Ensuring that facilities and digital tools are accessible for all staff and that there are relevant support measures in place.
- Reviewing flexible working arrangements, associated policies and working cultures to ensure that they are inclusive for staff from all backgrounds.
- Reviewing family and caring policies to ensure that they meet the needs of and are inclusive to people from different backgrounds.
- Reviewing how researchers and academics can be encouraged and supported to deliver inclusive research and education.
- Reviewing the role of research funding policies and researcher development and leadership schemes in supporting socially disadvantaged groups.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

This report presents a **review of emerging practices for inclusive gender equality in European R&I systems**, which was carried out from October 2021 to February 2022. To promote diversity in R&I and open its gender policies to intersections with other social characteristics, the European Commission supports the development of inclusive gender equality plans (GEPs) and policies, in line with the Communication ‘A new ERA for Research and Innovation’<sup>4</sup> and the [ERA Policy Agenda 2022 – 2024](#) action 5: ‘Promote gender equality and foster inclusiveness, taking note of the Ljubljana Declaration’<sup>5</sup>.

Given the breadth and complexity of the agenda, and the **early stage of development** of the activity that was identified and reviewed, this report contributes to the development of a long-term agenda for structural change. The aims of this report include helping to expand and deepen knowledge and translate this into concrete evidence-based recommendations that can feed into the ERA objectives on the development of inclusive gender equality plans and policies. Measures to be considered by this research include those that might support the removal of systemic structural barriers in R&I organisations and their impact on socially disadvantaged groups and persons at risk of discrimination in R&I. In particular, this report examines measures to support the inclusion of racial and ethnic minority students, researchers and staff, third-country migrants, and refugees, as well as persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ persons, and, where possible, also persons from a low-income background.

The report is structured in four sections. This introductory section outlines the aims of the report and the approach that was taken to the research. This is followed by a section looking at the context for action to develop inclusive gender equality plans and policies, including the policy frameworks and patterns of discrimination and inequality for marginalised and socially disadvantaged groups in European R&I. This is then followed by a review of actions and interventions in the R&I sector that aim to address the equality of these groups, at the national level and by research performing organisations (RPO) and research funding organisations (RFOs). The third section then examines the themes that emerge from this review of emerging practice, including approaches to equality and diversity, the availability of data, and the types of interventions that could support structural approaches for change. The fourth section presents conclusions from the work and a series of recommendations for taking forward action at the European and national level, and by RFOs and RPOs.

4 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A new ERA for Research and Innovation COM(2020)628 final

5 Council of the European Union. Council conclusions (adopted 26/11/2021): Future governance of the European Research Area (14308/21)

## 1.2 Approach

This report presents **recommendations to support the development of inclusive approaches to gender equality policies and action plans in the ERA**. Developing inclusive approaches to gender equality in R&I settings is an opportunity to recognise the interrelationship between different forms of discrimination that may stem from the intersection of gender with race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, as well as socio-economic background (See for example, Verloo 2006; Pimminger 2013; and Palmén 2021). However, when developing this work and associated recommendations to support more inclusive approaches to gender equality, a number of considerations needed to be taken into account:

- As illustrated by action to support gender equality, efforts to secure equality require long-term commitment to structural and organisational change that is both specific to R&I settings but also set in the context of structural inequality in wider society (Ferguson 2021).
- The scope of the objective to develop inclusive approaches to GEPs encompasses a diverse range of experiences with distinct concerns and experiences of discrimination and multi-layered professional and personal identities.
- The histories and contemporary experiences in different Member States have shaped a range of structural barriers in education and employment, and discrimination in R&I settings, which may result in different priorities in relation to an inclusive gender equality agenda.
- In some Member States and Associated Countries, the rights of migrants as well as sexual minorities are being directly challenged by governments and other political groupings, and there are political tensions between certain rights.
- Broader approaches across a range of equality grounds have the potential to, or be perceived to, lessen the specific focus on equality between men and women that is integral to gender equality, or to fail to address the specific dimensions of inequality experienced by other groups (see for example Holzleitner 2005).

Therefore, in order to support the development of effective long-term action, this research aims to assess patterns of activity in European R&I and identify the principles and characteristics of effective approaches to inclusive gender equality that will support:

- The development of a shared understanding of what is meant by inclusive approaches to gender equality and GEPs. This includes articulating how addressing different social dimensions of inequality and identities can be addressed as part of ongoing efforts to enhance action in relation to gender equality objectives.
- An understanding of the issues that are being addressed and the types of actions that are being adopted by national authorities and R&I organisations in relation to the inclusion of social groups with different characteristics in R&I settings. This will include assessment of common issues or themes that should be addressed through inclusive GEP practice.
- Recommendations on effective approaches to developing inclusive GEPs and how these can be developed with support by DG RTD. This will include the types of stakeholder engagement, advice, guidance, and support that may be required in the context of highly variable and, in many cases, limited levels of awareness, engagement and activity in the R&I sector.

In line with the ERA Communication, the report takes a broad approach to inclusion but emphasises measures to address equality and inclusion based on race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTIQ groups), and inclusion of refugees. In some cases, there are different definitions of groups in national contexts and organisations. This is particularly notable in relation to approaches to race and ethnicity where 'migrant background' is often used as a proxy for understanding these experiences in lieu of specific data on race and ethnicity. As the mapping and review of inclusive practices across Member States and Associated Countries was carried out before the invasion of Ukraine, good practices on the inclusion of refugee researchers arriving from Ukraine were not taken into account for this report. The Ukraine example highlights the difficulty of using migrant or refugee background as a proxy for ethnicity, with a largely white population fleeing the country.

Support for researchers in Ukraine developed rapidly with initiatives such as [ERA4Ukraine](#) being set up, as a one-stop-shop to support to Ukraine-based researchers and researchers fleeing Ukraine. Other initiatives include [#Science4Ukraine](#), a community group of volunteer students and research scientists from academic institutions in Europe and globally to disseminate information about support opportunities to graduate students and researchers, affiliated to Ukrainian academic institutions. Support for and attitudes towards researchers and students with a refugee background from countries outside of Europe may nevertheless differ, compared to the recently established networks and initiatives for Ukraine-based researchers. Similarly, their experiences of inclusion and equal opportunity at European host institutions may differ, especially if they belong to an ethnic minority.

The report also considers measures where patterns of discrimination may intersect with structural disadvantage, including socio-economic, such as the intersection between migrant background and economic and educational disadvantage, or educational disadvantages for persons with a disability.

In many cases actions reviewed by this research are situated or driven by the educational dimension of higher education organisations. In some contexts, including in the European Commission, responsibility for higher education and research are split between different departments. This is particularly relevant in relation to actions focused on low-income backgrounds, where many Member States have adopted measures to diversify enrolment at the undergraduate level in particular. Furthermore, many of the inclusion actions focused on specific groups are also linked to efforts to create inclusive educational environments within higher education organisations. Work focused on higher education is noted throughout the report as it is clearly relevant to the R&I talent pipeline and a driving factor in the work of many RPOs, many of which are also higher education organisations. However, the primary focus of the report is on actions that aim to address equality in the R&I sector more specifically.

As mentioned above, a key aim of the report is to support the development of inclusive gender equality policies and plans, in line with the ambitions of the European Research Area. GEPs enable structural action to address the policies, practices, and cultures that underpin inequalities between men and women in R&I. This includes measures to promote equality of opportunities and outcomes for groups and individuals based on personal and social characteristics, measures that aim to promote recognition and respect for different backgrounds, experiences and identities, and steps to create inclusive working environments and cultures that foster positive and equal relationships. Within this context **intersectionality**, a term coined by the US academic Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, enables a more sophisticated understanding of how an individual's identity and the intersecting patterns of discrimination shape inequalities (Palmén 2021). The [Gendered Innovations 2](#) (European Commission 2020) report on inclusive analysis highlights the importance of intersectional approaches and the World Health Organisation has published a toolkit for researchers on intersectionality that illustrate the importance of the concept to research. The WHO toolkit described intersectionality as follows:



*“Intersectionality is an emerging research paradigm that seeks to ‘move beyond single or typically favoured categories of analysis (e.g. sex, gender, ‘race’ and class) to consider simultaneous interactions between different aspects of social identity, as well as the impact of systems and processes of oppression and domination.’ Intersectional analysis enables a multi-faceted exploration of how factors of privilege and penalty may alternate between contexts or occur simultaneously. Intersectionality is not additive; you should consider how human and social characteristics such as age, gender, sex, ability, disability, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. interact to shape individual experience at a given point or time.”*

**World Health Organisation 2020**

Inclusive gender equality policies and action plans are therefore coherent actions that, as part of efforts toward gender equality, also consider how the interrelationship between certain characteristics may drive patterns of inequality. An intersectional lens is crucial for the effectiveness of all equality actions. However, to aid understanding of different approaches, this report also tries to describe the emphasis of different approaches in practice. Actions where the primary axis of the intervention is gender, but which have been extended to address other dimensions are described as Gender+. Actions where the primary axis is focused on characteristics other than gender, such as race, disability, or sexual orientation, are described as single characteristic approaches. Actions that do not foreground a particular axis of inequality, and aim to address multiple characteristics in combination, are described as equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) approaches. These descriptions are intended to be illustrative and in practice there is usually significant overlap between these types of measures, including where multiple interventions comprise organisational or systemic level strategies for change. The approaches are examined further in section 4.

## 1.3 Data collection and analysis

The report presents the findings of a mapping of policies, strategies, measures and best practices on equality, diversity, and inclusion in higher education and R&I organisations at EU level, as well as Member State and Associated Country level. It draws on selected examples of relevant activity that have been collected through a national mapping survey, a call for examples from RPOs and RFOs and through desk research. The research aimed to **identify and review actions** that addressed socially disadvantaged groups in R&I to understand where emerging practice can be found and the themes and characteristics that are developing. Relevant learning from the experience of gender equality actions has informed the findings presented in this report. However, in terms of the mapping and review activities, actions that were only focused on gender, without consideration of other characteristics, were not the focus of this work. A general review of actions focused on social dimension of higher education, or general national policy equalities frameworks was also beyond the scope of this work. The close relationship between these agendas is examined throughout the report and through the illustrative examples that are presented.

The mapping survey of national actions was distributed to national authorities via the [ERA Forum for Transition](#). 12 national authorities submitted responses, and a further seven Member States and Associated countries were also reviewed through desk research. The call for examples was targeted at organisations that were known to have or likely to have developed a GEP and were engaged in European dialogues and activities on gender equality. This survey was distributed directly to RPOs identified through a prior survey of European University Alliance members that had a GEP, the coordinators of Horizon 2020 GEP projects, and via existing European university networks. 33 examples of inclusive gender equality actions were received via the call for examples that were augmented by examples identified through desk review. The mapping survey and call for examples invited organisations to submit examples of actions to support socially disadvantaged groups, including through multiple-choice questions and open text opportunities, in order to provide more detail about relevant actions.

The call for examples and national mapping surveys aimed to identify relevant actions and to provide insight into the breadth, focus and characteristics of relevant actions. The two surveys were augmented by desk research, in addition to input via scoping interviews, to identify additional examples of relevant actions in scope of this work. Following initial review of all examples submitted, a sub-sample of actions, including examples identified through desk research, were selected for further in-depth review. A sub-set of the national and organisational examples were then selected for further in-depth examination of the characteristics and features of approaches and how these may inform inclusive approaches to GEPs. See Annex C for an overview of the review of national actions, including case studies. A review of relevant literature was also undertaken to inform the overall approach to the work, and to guide selection and analysis of examples.

The themes and recommendations presented in this report have also been developed through feedback from stakeholders. This includes scoping interviews with 12 individuals from national authorities, RFOs, and RPOs. As part of the review findings and to guide the development of recommendations, an online round table was also held with 19 participants from national authorities, RFOs and RPOs and academic experts. The round table considered the themes that had emerged from the mapping and call for examples, shared further examples of practice and considered potential recommendations to support the development of inclusive GEPs. The list of individuals who have provided inputs during the development of this work is presented in Annex B. Their inclusion does not imply acceptance of the findings and recommendations of this report.

The limited availability of equality data on characteristics other than gender in R&I, and the relatively recent nature of most interventions, means it is not possible to directly consider the impact and effectiveness of the measures. A key element of future action as part of inclusive GEPs will therefore be identifying relevant equality data sources, and developing a data collection framework, including for the consideration of qualitative equality data in R&I settings. Furthermore, evaluating the impact of interventions in the context of multifaceted structural drivers of inequality has been a persistent challenge for gender equality over the much longer period in which action has been taken (Palmén et al 2019). These issues are considered in more detail in section 3. Nevertheless, the report aims to guide practical steps by RPOs, RFOs and national authorities through consideration of the types of interventions that are being taken, how these can be integrated into a coherent plan for systemic change at different levels, and the principles that can guide effective steps in this area.



## 2 DRIVERS FOR DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE GENDER EQUALITY PLANS AND POLICIES

This section examines the context for developing inclusive gender equality plans and policies, including the general EU policy context and patterns of inequality in European R&I. It examines the longstanding and emerging EU policy framework aimed at fostering equality for social groups at risk of exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination. It examines themes that have emerged from recent reviews of ongoing actions, particularly by RPOs. It highlights how to date many of these measures have primarily been developed in the context of the social dimension of higher education, and that measures focused on R&I more specifically are more recent and more limited, with the exception of the longer-term focus on gender. The section then goes on to examine the significant and persistent patterns of structural inequality in education and employment across the European Union that are relevant to R&I settings. It notes that whilst equality data in relation to R&I is limited, emerging research in some national sectors, as well as from RPOs and RFOs, identifies specific drivers of inequality in R&I that will need to be addressed through inclusive gender equality plans and policies.

### 2.1 Policy context

The development of inclusive approaches to gender equality in the ERA takes place in the context of **long-standing commitments to equality in the work of the European Union**, and action to support gender equality in R&I more specifically. Gender equality is a core value of the European Union that is enshrined in Articles 8, 10 and 19<sup>6</sup> of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and is embedded in Articles 21 and 23<sup>7</sup> of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights. In this context there has been a long-standing commitment to the promotion of gender equality in European R&I, including **specific commitments to gender equality as part of the European Research Area**. However, whilst Europe is a leader in gender equality, European policy also acknowledges that progress has been uneven and slower than expected and that work in the R&I sector and beyond is not complete<sup>8</sup>. In this context the European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 seeks to make substantial progress towards attaining a gender-equal Europe in R&I – a commitment reaffirmed by the Communication 'A new ERA for Research and Innovation'<sup>9</sup> and Council Conclusions on the New European Research Area (ERA) in December 2020<sup>10</sup>.

Progress toward gender equality in R&I has been underpinned by significant financial support through the Horizon research funding programmes, which have enabled an approach to addressing structural change across the whole R&I system. Over 200 R&I organisations have been funded through Horizon 2020 and the previous 7th framework programme, to enable the implementation of GEPs and the development of collaborative projects and implementation projects.<sup>11</sup> Actions that have been supported include training on gender equality in R&I (e.g. GE Academy), transnational cooperation at policy and funding level (e.g. GENDERACTION), communities of practice on GEPs (e.g. ACT) and examination of awards and certification schemes on gender equality in R&I organisations (e.g. CASPER). Furthermore, research organisations, higher education institutions, and public bodies from EU Member States and Associated Countries are now required to have a GEP to participate in Horizon Europe, and the gender dimension of research and gender balance of teams are also embedded in funding calls and award processes.

6 CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

7 CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 391–407

8 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025

9 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A new ERA for Research and Innovation COM(2020)628 final.

10 Council conclusions on the New European Research Area 1 December 2020 13567/20

11 As a result of 30 collaborative projects (9 projects under FP7, 21 projects under H2020), for a cumulated budget over 72 EUR Million.

As part of these efforts, it has been acknowledged that gender equality can only be achieved by considering the different experiences of discrimination and inequality. To make R&I systems more inclusive, the Commission has committed to opening its R&I gender policies to the intersection of gender with other personal characteristics or identities and potential grounds for discrimination and inequality. Therefore, the Commission has proposed as of 2021, in line with the Horizon Europe programme objectives, the development of inclusive GEPs with Member States and stakeholders. Inclusive GEPs seek to foster structural institutional change in higher education and R&I organisations and to ensure equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and inclusive work cultures for everyone, regardless of their sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, racial or ethnic origin, migrant background, socio-economic status, disability, and other grounds on which discrimination could take place.

Commitments to equality and diversity in R&I take place in the context of broader efforts of the von der Leyen Commission to build a Union of Equality. In addition to the European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 the Union of Equality also sets out a series of action plans in relation to other groups at risk of discrimination. The Union of Equality includes the [EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025](#), the [Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation](#), the [LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#) and the [EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#). Whilst these strategies do not set specific objectives in relation to R&I policy, they all include support for research in these areas and clear commitments to promoting equality in relation to education and employment, all of which are relevant to the R&I sector. They also raise awareness of discrimination and inequality in relation to different groups to support multi-level action.

At the national level, Member States and Associated Countries have made clear commitments to take action to support inclusive gender equality in R&I through the European Research Area (ERA), and the Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation. The ERA Policy Agenda, adopted by the Council on 26 November 2021, sets out 20 voluntary actions for Member States and Associated Countries to address at national level in the period 2022-2024, in collaboration with the Commission and stakeholders<sup>12</sup>. Action 5 of the ERA Policy Agenda commits to 'Promote gender equality and foster inclusiveness' and reiterates the need to support all aspects of gender equality through inclusive gender equality plans and policies. The ERA Policy Agenda also takes note of the Ljubljana Declaration on gender equality in R&I that was endorsed by 25 out of the 27 Member States, most Associated Countries, and the European Commission itself.<sup>13</sup> Within its priorities, the Declaration highlights the need to 'ensure fair, open, inclusive and gender equal career paths in research, and consider intersectional perspectives on gender inequalities'.

In addition to policy commitments in relation to equality in R&I, all Member States have national legal frameworks that prohibit discrimination on basis of a range of characteristics, including gender, race or ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. In some Member States there are also national action plans to support the equality and inclusion that are focused on equality for specific groups, including in relation to race or ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. However, to date, only a minority of states have adopted and implemented such plans. For example, the 2019 annual report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) found that 8 Member States had adopted action plans in relation to the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons and identified 15 race equality action plans, including migrant integration plans (FRA 2019). Where plans do exist, they address a range of actions in relation to education and employment, but few have commitments specifically focused on R&I. Some member states have national laws or action plans that address gender-based violence, however actions focused specifically on R&I are rare or less well developed (Fajmonová et al 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Council of the European Union. Council conclusions (adopted 26/11/2021): Future governance of the European Research Area (14308/21)

<sup>13</sup> The Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Estonia, the European Commission, the Republic of Finland, the French Republic, Georgia, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Hellenic Republic, Iceland, Ireland, the Italian Republic, the Republic of Kosovo, the Republic of Lithuania, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of Malta, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Poland (Statement), the Portuguese Republic, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Slovenia, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation.

Some national action plans do make commitments in the context of measures to support equality and diversity in higher education. These commitments are typically made as part of the **social dimension of the European Higher Education Area** which aims to strengthen equality and diversity in higher education and contribute to a more cohesive and inclusive society<sup>14</sup>. Similarly, the European Commission Communication on a European Strategy for Universities<sup>15</sup> also commits to action to promote equality as part of efforts to ensure that the university sector contributes to the social and economic needs of Europe. The social dimension is a significant element of higher education policy in European states. The agenda is associated with measures to increase enrolment of under-represented groups, with a general emphasis on undergraduate study (Kottman et al 2019)<sup>16</sup>. Measures are typically focused on socio-economic background and associated markers, such as parent or family education, mature learners, geography, students with a migration background, and disability. Measures include upstream education interventions (i.e. EQF levels 1 to 4), recruitment and admissions, financial support, and measures to enhance learning and employment outcomes.

In this context, European higher education organisations have developed commitments to address equality and diversity in their work. In addition to European and national policy frameworks, motivating factors include the internationalisation and globalisation of research, pressure from staff and students, and the social impact of education and research missions. For example, the 2019 League of European Research Universities (LERU) position paper 'Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach' highlighted the importance of addressing the inclusion of all under-represented groups through organisational change actions to the long-term success of universities (LERU 2019). Similarly, the INVITED project of the European University Association (EUA) has also highlighted the growing importance to universities and research organisations of promoting inclusive working and learning environments to educational and research missions (EUA 2019 and 2018). In North America and the UK there is also a growing body of action that aims to address equality and diversity in R&I organisations across a broader range of social characteristics.

Whilst there is commitment amongst many higher education organisations to act, the EUA's INVITED project also illustrated several barriers to change that have limited substantive progress in terms of outcomes and representation for diverse groups in higher education and research settings (EUA 2019). Issues that were identified in the survey included:

- a lack of awareness among university communities on the issue of equality and diversity
- a lack of funding and other resources for equality and diversity actions
- limited engagement with target groups
- limited training focused on inclusion and diversity for administrative, teaching and research staff.

These challenges reflect the comparative lack of systematic support for wider action that is reflected to a degree in European gender equality initiatives in R&I. For example, emerging findings from the CASPER project indicate that whilst a small number of award and certification schemes include a broader diversity approach, few incorporate specific actions in relation to specific characteristics, such as collection of data on different groups. Further, few of the current European gender equality actions in R&I address intersectional dimensions to any great degree. For example, whilst EIGE resources the GEAR tool, this does not yet address inclusive approaches to GEPs specifically. GE Academy has hosted workshops on intersectionality and has a video resource on intersectionality in institutional change processes in academic organisations, but these are relatively limited examples for what is a broad and substantial agenda.

14 PARIS COMMUNIQUÉ Paris, May 25th 2018. Retrieved on 17/04/22 from [http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial\\_declarations/EHEAParis2018\\_Communique\\_final\\_952771.pdf](http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_final_952771.pdf)

15 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS on a European strategy for universities (SWD(2022) 6 final)

16 These policies are typically referred to as 'widening participation' however to avoid confusion with other applications of the phrase these policies are described here as diversifying entry to higher education.

## 2.2 Inequality in European R&I

There is evidence of persistent and long-standing inequality and discrimination across the European Union. For example, the Eurobarometer survey and work by the FRA highlights persistently high levels of discrimination across the European Union. Whilst there are variations between Member States, 59% of respondents to the 2019 Eurobarometer survey believed that there was racial and ethnic discrimination in their country, almost half (47%) believed that discrimination on the basis of religion and belief is widespread and 44% believed that discrimination on the basis of disability was widespread (European Commission 2019). Further, 20% of respondents across the European Union did not agree that gay, lesbian and bisexual people should have the same rights as heterosexual people and 29% did not agree that transgender or transsexual persons should be able to change their civil documents to match their inner gender identity (European Commission 2019).

R&I organisations are employers and educators and develop ideas and ways of thinking that shape society. Further, employment and education are key locations for experiences of discrimination across Europe. For example, the FRA Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey found that amongst ethnic minorities in the European Union<sup>17</sup> 29% of respondents had experienced discrimination searching for work, and 22% in work in the five years before the survey, with 50% mentioning skin colour or physical appearance as a factor in their experience (FRA 2017a). Findings from the 2020 FRA report 'A long way to go for LGBTI equality' show a similar situation (FRA 2020). A total of 26% of respondents to the survey stated that they hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at work, whilst more than a third (37%) felt discriminated against in areas of life other than work, including, at school or university. The rates are highest for trans (55%) and intersex (59%) respondents. One in five (19%) felt discriminated against in educational settings.

The FRA survey work also highlights the fact that experiences of harassment are a significant issue for a range of different groups. For example, 40% of respondents experienced harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, but just under a tenth of respondents (9%) had reported the harassment to any relevant authority (FRA 2020). Similarly, 90% of ethnic minority respondents to the FRA minorities and discrimination survey indicated that they did not report any hate-motivated harassment – either to the police or to another organisation or service (FRA 2017a). Similarly, amongst Muslim respondents to the minorities and discrimination survey, just under a tenth (9%) reported harassment to any relevant authority (FRA 2017b). Further, just over one in four (28%) of all respondents to the FRA second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU stated that they experienced antisemitic harassment at least once during a five-year period but eight in 10 respondents (79%) did not report the most serious incident to the police or other organisation (FRA 2018).

There are also indications that discrimination on the basis of religion is an increasingly important factor across Europe. The FRA report 'Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism' also highlighted the fact that almost nine in 10 (89%) respondents who identified as Jewish felt that antisemitism had increased in their country in the five years before the survey and that eight in 10 (85%) considered this to be a serious problem (FRA 2018). Respondents to the survey tended to rate antisemitism as the biggest social or political problem where they lived, including on the internet and in social media (89%), public spaces (73%), media (71%) and in political life (70%).



<sup>17</sup> The groups included in the FRA analysis are Sub Saharan African, North African, South Asian, Roma and Russian minority, and recent immigrants from non-EU countries.

Similarly, one in five ethnic minority Muslims reported discrimination on the basis of their religion in EU-MIDIS II in 2017, in comparison to one in 10 ethnic minority Muslims (10%) EU-MIDIS I in 2008 (FRA 2017b). This trend includes a generational shift in which second-generation Muslim respondents from a minority ethnic or migrant background mention religious discrimination more often than first generation Muslim migrants (22% and 15%, respectively). Muslim women noted higher levels of discrimination due to their clothing: 35% of Muslim women who looked for work, compared with 4% of Muslim men, mentioned clothing as a reason for discrimination, and 22% of Muslim women, compared with 7% of Muslim men, mention this when at work (FRA 2017b). Around 12% of Muslim respondents who were at work in the five years preceding the survey reported that they were not allowed to take time off for an important religious holiday, service or ceremony, and 9% reported that they were prevented from expressing or carrying out religious practices and customs, such as praying or wearing a headscarf or turban (FRA 2017b).

As illustrated by the European Commission's She Figures series of publications, there are persistent, long standing, and observable gender inequalities in R&I (European Commission 2021). However, systematic data in relation to inequality in R&I beyond gender in Europe is extremely limited. Research in relation to the experiences of racial and ethnic minority staff in R&I settings suggests that there are common experiences between national contexts that are likely to be relevant across the ERA. This includes analysis undertaken in Norway (Box 1) (using migrant background as a proxy indicator for race/ethnicity) and Ireland on the experiences of minority ethnic staff and students in higher education that also reflects experiences from the UK (Work Research Institute 2016; KIF 2015; HEA 2020; Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) 2020; Advance HE 2020; Advance HE 2019; NUS 2019; Bhopal & Henderson 2019b; and Bhopal 2019). Findings from this work suggest that:

- Minority ethnic researchers are under-represented in senior academic positions and receive lower rates of pay, especially in more senior positions. Minority ethnic staff may have higher rates of temporary contracts and may also be over-represented in administrative or support services. Patterns of representation may also differ between different disciplines.
- Implicit biases in the way candidates are identified and recruited and evaluated can make it more challenging for ethnic minority staff, including those from a migrant background, to attain research positions and progress into senior leadership positions.
- Minority ethnic staff are more likely to experience racial prejudice, including bullying and harassment by students and staff, and have a less positive view of the inclusivity of their organisations. Experiences may include harmful 'micro aggressions', or implicit biases, including assumptions about their nationality, culture, and ethnicity, professional credentials, and exclusion from social and professional networks.
- Minority ethnic staff may find it difficult to raise or report their concerns and experiences, for fear of being discredited and therefore experiencing further career disadvantages and isolation.
- There are gaps between high levels of motivation to enter higher education and research careers amongst students from a minority ethnic or migrant backgrounds, and subsequent rates of participation in R&I careers. Students from migrant or minority ethnic backgrounds may also experience additional educational and socio-economic disadvantages throughout their education, including higher education.
- Minority ethnic students may be more likely not to complete their studies and to receive lower grades, including when controlling for a student's prior attainment and socio-economic background. Minority ethnic student outcomes may be disadvantaged by socio-economic background, discrimination in teaching and assessment practices, and negative experiences of studying, including isolation.

Race and ethnicity and migrant background are often used interchangeably, with migrant background frequently used as a proxy for racial or ethnic minorities, as well as directly describing the experiences of migrants. Whilst there is overlap between these two groups, there are also some important distinctions that are particularly relevant for R&I settings. This category typically conflates domestic students and staff from racial and ethnic minorities, which may include a family migrant background, who are studying or working in their domestic R&I sector, with internationally mobile students and staff who have migrated specifically for the purposes of study or work, including those from visible racial and minority ethnic groups.

Whilst some experiences of harassment and discrimination will be shared there are also significant differences due to intersections with factors such as socio-economic status and family background, and therefore patterns and experience of inequality will differ.

Whilst there is limited specific work on disability in R&I settings, there are longstanding inequalities in educational outcomes. More young persons with disabilities leave school early and fewer learners with disabilities complete a university degree (European Commission 2021c). Furthermore, women may also be less likely to receive appropriate support for neuro-diverse learning needs. There are persistent challenges relating to the physical accessibility of facilities, as well the accessibility of online learning tools and resources. Across higher education more generally there is also a growing focus on mental health dimensions of disability and the impact on student attainment and outcomes, as well as the mental health welfare of staff within this context. In the context of R&I more specifically, researchers may be reluctant to disclose disability for fear of stigma and discrimination, particularly in the case of those with mental health conditions (Royal Society 2020). This can be particularly pronounced for early career researchers seeking permanent roles in competitive fields. In addition, assumptions about academic working practices, including full-time working patterns and presence at conferences and networking events, can be challenging for people with a disability (Royal Society 2020).

**BOX 1****RESEARCHERS WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND IN NORWAY**

This Norwegian case helps to illustrate key trends in relation to staff from migrant backgrounds, including internationally mobile staff and Norwegian descendants of migrants. It should be noted that migrant background may be used as proxy indicator for ethnicity, which may be useful for Member States in which collection of data on ethnicity is limited/not available.

In 2018, 29% of researchers in Norway were from a migrant background, a share that had grown by 10 percentage points from 2009 (NIFU 2020). The proportion of researchers with a migrant background was higher than the national proportion of people with a migrant background in Norway more generally.

About 80% of the researchers with a migrant background were internationally mobile researchers with higher education from abroad (NIFU 2020). Researchers from China were the largest group of internationally mobile researchers from outside Europe, followed by researchers from India. In general, men made up a larger proportion of migrant research staff from outside of Europe, although there were variations depending on country of origin and subject. The analysis noted that there tended to be higher rates of internationally mobile women researchers in disciplines that had predominately male staff, and higher rates of internationally mobile men in the disciplines with predominately female researchers. The analysis tentatively suggested that this indicates that departments are recruiting internationally mobile researchers to improve the gender balance, the number of qualified Norwegian women in these fields is low, or that those qualified do not apply for open positions.

Whilst the total proportion of staff in R&I with a migrant background was higher than the national average, Norwegian descendants of immigrants were under-represented amongst research staff. This includes when compared with the general population, the economically active population, and in relation to higher education students. Norwegian-born staff with a migrant background accounted for 0.5 per cent of researchers, compared with 0.4 per cent in 2007 (NIFU 2020). However, Norwegian students with a migrant background reported higher rates of motivation to participate in post graduate study and to enter research careers in comparison to the general population, but also encountered more difficulty in entering and securing permanent positions in Norwegian R&I. Structural factors included educational disadvantage, a lack of personal professional networks, and isolating and excluding practices and cultures in R&I settings (Work Research Institute 2016).

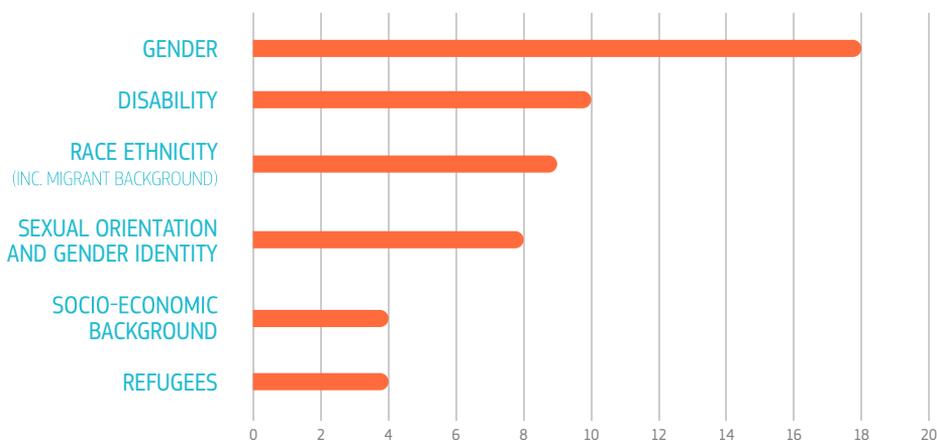
## 3 REVIEW OF INCLUSIVE GENDER EQUALITY PLANS AND POLICIES

This section examines the development of inclusive gender equality actions by national authorities, RFOs and RPOs, including examples that have been identified through a national mapping survey, the call for examples, and desk research. It outlines the emerging range of actions that are being taken at national level and by RPOs to support the inclusion of marginalised groups, including measures addressing discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity, including migrant background, sexual orientation and gender identity and disability. It examines the types of interventions that are being developed, including strategic organisational plans to promote inclusion, the extension of harassment policies to include other types of harassment, awareness-raising campaigns, diversity training, and adaptations to facilities to promote accessibility. However, it also notes that measures and objectives in relation to the diversity of workforce and leadership remain more limited in scope. In practice this section suggests that gender remains the primary focus for most actions and that only a smaller set of national authorities and RPOs have developed clear plans for structural change in relation to multiple characteristics.

### 3.1 National action

At the national level there are a growing number of examples of inclusive approaches to gender equality that aim to address a range of other social characteristics. However, in most cases this activity is in the **early stages of development** and is only a relatively small aspect of established gender equality activity. Of the 18 Member States and Associated Countries that were reviewed for this exercise, including responses to a survey, interviews, and desk review, 11 reported the development of actions that addressed characteristics in addition to gender (**Figure 1**). This includes nine examples that addressed the inclusion of racial or ethnic minorities, including migrant background, 10 countries where actions were being taken in relation to disability and eight cases where actions were being taken in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. There were four cases where actions were being taken in relation to socio-economic background, including two addressing geographical diversity and there were also four cases where actions were reported in relation to the inclusion of refugees.

#### CHARACTERISTICS ADDRESSED BY NATIONAL EQUALITIES ACTIONS



**Figure 1** Characteristics addressed by national equalities actions (n=18) (Source: national mapping survey and desk top research)



There are indications that inclusive gender equality actions at the national level are being developed as part of broad-based objectives to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion within the R&I sector. In 11 of the 18 cases, national-level actions were focused on promoting equality and diversity and inclusion more generally, including eight that were specifically described as Gender+ approaches. This includes two cases where the only characteristic being addressed in the action plan was gender and one case where initiatives were focused only on gender equality, sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition, there were 11 cases where national-level actions were also targeted at a specific characteristic, and in six cases of these action was also focused on specific characteristics other than gender. A combined approach that encompassed inclusion and diversity, Gender+ and action on single characteristic was the most common combination (six cases). In practice however, gender was the primary focus of the actions reviewed through this research. Gender accounted for most of the national actions focused on R&I and clearly identifiable structural actions focused on the R&I sector that addressed groups or characteristics other than gender were less common or well defined.

Where action was being taken in relation to other characteristics, this activity was linked in a number of cases to general national action plans, laws focused on discrimination or higher education policies with a social dimension. Although general laws or strategies were not specifically targeted at the R&I sector, these plans and laws were still relevant to R&I organisations as employers and education settings. These included actions to support accessibility of facilities for people with disabilities, recruitment policies at application and interview stages, as well as the introduction of policies on harassment and discrimination at work in relation to protected characteristics. For example, the 2008 discrimination act in **Sweden**, amended in 2017, combats discrimination and promotes equal rights and opportunities regardless of sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age. In **Portugal** there are similar legal protections allied to national strategies in relation to integration of migrants and disability and sexual orientation that are relevant to R&I organisations. More broadly, the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (ENIND) expresses the commitment of the Portuguese Ministry towards promoting equality and inclusiveness in innovation and scientific and technological development.

A range of different types of interventions that could support inclusive GEP objectives were reported or identified through this work. Actions focused on talent pipeline, recruitment, and progression, were reported in 15 cases. This was followed by initiatives focused on research funding and outcomes, which was reported or identified in 13 cases. Measures to promote an accessible and inclusive working environment and actions to address prejudice, discrimination and harassment were also noted in 11 instances. Measures to diversify organisational governance and management were noted in 10 cases and measures to address the content of research and curricula were noted in eight cases. However, many of these measures were in practice primarily focused on gender equality, with no obvious consideration of other characteristics or intersectional dimensions. Similarly, actions focused on talent pipeline, including those targeted on socio-economic background and disability, appeared to be mainly linked to social dimension policies. There appeared to be relatively few specific measures to diversify organisational governance and management, or to support research careers and leadership, for social characteristics other than gender (see **Box 3** for examples).

On further review, a smaller set of Member States and Associated Countries, have developed, or are developing, clear **national action plans**, or equivalent frameworks, to promote structural change in R&I that address other forms of discrimination and under-representation (see **Box 2**). In 2020 the **Netherlands** published an integrated 'National action plan for more diversity and inclusion in higher education and research' that addresses multiple characteristics. In **Ireland**, action is being taken forward as part of the ministerial and departmental objective of promoting equality and diversity in research and higher education, which is set in the context of general national strategies focused on specific characteristics as well as the national strategy to widen participation in higher education. In **Norway**, the mandate of the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research committee (KIF), that was originally set up in 2004 to address gender equality, was extended by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2014 to also address the inclusion of researchers with a 'migrant background', as a proxy for ethnicity and minorities.

## EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

In the **Netherlands**, the National action plan for greater diversity and inclusion in higher education and research uses a broad definition of diversity that includes visible characteristics (e.g. gender, cultural background) and less visible characteristics (e.g. disability, psychological illness, chronic illness, sexual preference, socio-economic background, beliefs, religion, talents, working style, education, experience). It also acknowledged the need for an intersectional approach.

In **Norway**, the mandate for the Committee for Gender Balance in Research was extended in to encompass Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF) in 2014, with a specific emphasis on ethnic diversity. One of the first actions under the new committee mandate was to commission research into the experience of minority ethnic researchers in Norway, titled “It’s not an advantage to be a foreigner” (Work Research Institute 2016). This has informed a series of recommendations and actions focused on organisational change in the R&I sector, including support to integrate ethnic diversity alongside gender equality in RPOS action plans, including advice on diversifying researcher recruitment.

In **Austria**, the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2019–2024 includes objective 8: Social responsibility of universities: gender equality, diversity and social inclusion, responsible science, sustainability and digital transformation. This commits the ministry and universities to improve social inclusion and establish a diversity-oriented culture of equality in universities as part of their wider research and education missions. This includes a series of requirements through performance agreements and legal requirements, to implement equality and diversity plans and strategies, and to ensure equality for people with a disability/health impediment and accessibility in teaching and research as a component of university development.

In **Ireland**, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has set a strategic Goal 4: Champion Equality Provide leadership, advocate equality and respect for all, support inclusive learning, working and research environments. Following on from this, the Higher Education Authority has undertaken a review of race and ethnicity in higher education (HEA 2019). In addition to specific R&I actions, there are also a series of national-level actions plans and frameworks that address the inclusion of under-represented groups that also apply to R&I organisations. These include the National Action Plan Against Racism and National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021, the National disability inclusion strategy, the Comprehensive employment strategy, the Migrant Integration Strategy (2017-20), and the LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy (2019-21).

In **France**, discrimination is one of the strategic priorities of the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Gender equality, LGBTIQ, and disability are the characteristics that are being specifically addressed. Actions include the establishment of a Strategic Committee “Social Diversity in Higher Education” which includes geographic diversity and the action plan for equal rights, against hatred and anti-LGBT+ discrimination for the period 2020-2023. The ministry also participates in the Inter-ministerial committee on disability and funds ‘Doctorate Handicap’ scholarships to support doctoral level study for students with disabilities.

Further details of these examples are presented in Annex C.



As already noted, many of the actions focused on R&I are also closely linked to policies focused on the social dimension of higher education. Social dimension policies typically focus on the diversity of undergraduate students but also address reforms to higher education organisations and their teaching and learning environments. For example, in **Austria**, relevant actions are being taken in the context of the [National strategy on the social dimension of higher education - Towards more inclusive access and wider participation](#). Research dimensions are then addressed through the [Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2019–2024](#), specifically through the objective of advancing the social responsibility of universities, and their role in advancing gender equality, diversity and social inclusion, responsible science, sustainability, and digital transformation. Similarly in **France**, there are examples of social dimension actions being led by the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation that are focused on disability and sexual orientation and gender identity in higher education and research settings.

A key activity is the development of **advice and guidance for R&I organisations** in particular to develop inclusive gender equality actions and practices. In the Netherlands this includes the development of guidance on institutional actions plans as well as a research centre of excellence on equality and diversity. In Norway Kilden coordinates and [hosts practical guidance and advice for research organisations](#) on behalf of the KIF. Topics include recruitment, leadership and governance, student experience and welfare, and organisational planning, as well as publishing research and insight into equality issues. This includes examples of a list of inclusive GEPs, alongside examples of plans to curb sexual harassment. In France, the ministry has published [a guide on combating anti-LGBT hatred and discrimination in higher education and research](#). The guide lists elements, definitions and situations relating to LGBT phobia, statistical and legal data, examples of good practices and initiatives carried out by establishments.

As noted previously, many of the actions to promote equality and diversity in R&I are closely linked to and embedded in actions to promote the social diversity of higher education students, particularly at undergraduate level. All the actions reviewed for the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, and Ireland, as well as the UK, highlight the need to create inclusive environments for students from different backgrounds as part of social dimension policies. In addition, there are also examples of schemes that are aimed more specifically at **increasing the diversity of researchers**, including through doctoral study. For example, there are funding initiatives to support doctoral students with a disability in France, and in the Netherlands has a scholarship scheme for students with a migrant background. Further information of these schemes is presented in **Box 3**.



### EXAMPLES OF DIVERSIFYING ENTRY TO R&I CAREERS

There is a wide range of actions focused on widening participation in higher education more generally that have been undertaken as part of the broader Bologna process (Kottmann et al 2019; Eurydice 2020). For example, the Austrian “[National strategy on the social dimension of higher education – towards more inclusive access and wider participation](#)” addresses the recruitment and career outcomes of students whose parents do not have higher education entrance qualifications or who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and women or men in particular degree programmes; students from particular regions/federal states; students with migrant backgrounds (with an Austrian entrance qualification); and students with a disability and/or chronic illness.

More specifically to R&I, the project “[Promotionsstellen ohne Limit – PromoLi](#)” of the national universities association [Universities Austria](#) (uniko) aims to create a sufficient number of positions at universities throughout Austria in the form of a permanent funding programme under which people with disabilities and/or chronic illness can study for their doctorates. The aim is to enable these persons to gain the prerequisites for a career in the arts or sciences, entry into non-university research or other gainful activity.

Other schemes that are specifically focused on attracting and financially supporting students from under-represented backgrounds to enter into research careers, including through doctoral-level study include:

- [Mission MINT](#) scheme of The Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany, which includes strands focused on supporting young women, including in special life situations, e.g. women from migrant families, women with disabilities, single parents, to enter into academic professional fields.
- [MOSAIC 2.0](#) scheme of the Dutch Research Council (NWO) for students from a non-European migrant background.
- [Doctoral Handicap](#) scheme of the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation in France.
- The HEA Ireland [Fund for Students with Disabilities](#) including post graduate students, assists higher education institutions to provide necessary assistance and equipment to ensure access.

## 3.2 Research funding organisation

At the national level there are some emerging examples of actions being developed specifically by research funding organisations in Europe. In addition, there are also useful examples from North America, including the National Science Foundation in the United States, and the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) (**Box 4**), in Canada. European-level research funding organisations have developed clear gender equality actions which acknowledge the wider agenda of equality and diversity. However, these activities have not yet been extended to include other characteristics. For example, the European Research Council and European Science Foundation have in place actions in relation to gender but do not yet address other characteristics. Science Europe is committed to promoting “*a research ecosystem where all scholars can realise their potential regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities, ethnic origin, or social background*”<sup>18</sup>. To support this objective Science Europe has initiated a review of the [Practical Guide to Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations](#), to address other characteristics.

**FONDS DE RECHERCHE DU QUÉBEC: EQUITY, DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2021- 2026****BOX 4**

The Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021 to 2026 aims to promote equity and inclusive practices that allow all individuals to be recognised for their skills and ability to contribute to research excellence. It also aims to ensure that diversity of people, perspectives, methodologies and research questions reflect the concerns and needs of society as a whole and that diverse and inclusive models of excellence enable Québec research to stand out for its quality, relevance, creativity and impact. Principles of the EDI strategy are the following:

- A concerted approach with the research ecosystem is paramount: this includes collaboration between funding bodies, research performing organisations, researchers and students, including long-standing advocates for change within the research community.
- Diversity is broad and intersectional: the strategy addresses but is not limited to, gender, disability, indigenous identity, racialised groups, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, age, language, parenthood, immigration, geographic location, and socio-economic status and takes into account interactions between different types of discrimination.
- EDI objectives go far beyond diversity statistics: in order to avoid the tokenism of under-represented groups, efforts must be directed not only at increasing diversity, but also at equitable and inclusive practices that allow every individual to participate in research, develop his or her full potential, and feel respected and valued.
- The principles of EDI must be integrated in all aspects of research: for the FRQ, this applies to programme development and management, and to the evaluation of funding applications. For the research community, this applies to: the creation of research teams; training and mentoring; research questions and approach to methods; the planning and execution of projects, including fieldwork; and the interpretation and dissemination of results.

Actions by research funding organisations are often linked to national government policies that aim to enhance the **talent pipeline into R&I sectors**. These policies form part of economic growth strategies and actions to promote the development of industrial sectors, particularly in relation to STEM sectors. In Austria, the federal government's RTI strategy 2030 includes the aim of strengthening gender equality and diversity in R&D. Similarly, as noted in Germany, the MISSION MINT Initiative is embedded in the people and talent dimensions of the German government's High-Tech Strategy 2025. In Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland funds the STEM passport for inclusion, which aims to support young working class women to enter into STEM careers. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the national funding agency for science and research in the United Kingdom, is consulting on its own equality and diversity strategy in the context of the UK government's R&D People and Culture Strategy that sets out a series of commitments to diversify entry into R&I careers for people from different backgrounds and career paths. In the main, gender equality continues to be the principal focus of activity for research funding organisations, including targets and specific schemes, whilst also acknowledging diversity and other characteristics in more general terms, allied to some targeted intersectional initiatives.

There are several examples of actions being developed by research funding organisations to promote **inclusive and respectful research environments and practices**. These measures aim to address general movements to challenge problematic behaviours and cultures in employment and education settings, including responding to cultural and systemic issues in research careers, including imbalances in educational and professional relationships, competitive labour markets, and autonomous working practices. For example, at the request of the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) has published [Social Safety in Dutch Academia: From Paper to Practice](#), a guide with recommendations for the organisational structure, the workplace culture, and the systems needed to address inappropriate behaviour at an early stage. The guide provides examples taken from the experience of deans, people who have reported a problem, confidential counsellors and others, as well as a clear ‘first-aid kit’ for dealing with inappropriate behaviour at the workplace. The work responded to a [report on harassment in Dutch academia](#) published by the National Network of Women Professors (LNVH) that highlighted issues of misconduct and harassment. Similarly, in the UK the UKRI has published a statement on bullying and harassment, which includes expectations for funded organisations and researchers, and has convened a forum of funding, policy, and regulatory organisations to collect evidence, disseminate good practice and campaign to raise awareness to bring about cultural change.



Some funding bodies are starting to collect **data on researcher characteristics**, in addition to gender. For example, the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is considering plans to collect baseline data for different protected groups to support actions to promote equality in funding and developmental activities. Further, in 2021 the Fonds de recherche Quebec put into place a new self-identification questionnaire to collect information about the different personal characteristics of funding applicants (FRQ 2021). In addition to proposals to collect data on bullying and harassment, the UKRI has collected data on applicants to its funding schemes since 2014, including gender, ethnicity, and disability. Analysis of this data shows that women, ethnic minorities, and people with a disability are on average less likely to receive funding and receive lower levels of funding, and a lower proportion of the application amount (UKRI 2021a). However, further work is also required to control for the effects of other background factors such as career stage, interactions within research offices and type and geographic location of the research organisation.

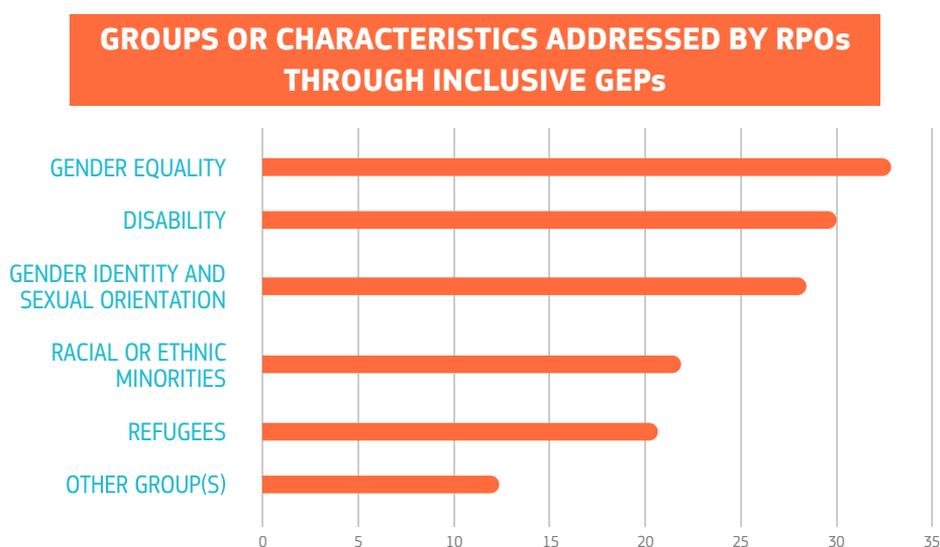
Some funding bodies have also started to examine how **researcher development schemes** and funding policies can promote equality and diversity in relation to different characteristics. This includes how policies and funding can support applicants from different backgrounds. For example, the [Austria Science Fund](#) (FWF) has developed specific funding policies that take into account the life and career circumstances for people with disabilities, chronic illness, or other difficult factors. In Norway the KIF has noted the role that existing mentoring schemes can play in supporting researchers from marginalised backgrounds. However, in most cases mentoring and support actions are mainstreamed as part of existing streams, for example, UKRI notes the role that its [Future Leaders Fellows Development Network](#) can play in diversifying research leadership, alongside work with researcher networks to pilot developmental initiatives to address racial barriers in research careers, and trialling changes to the assessment of research careers in applications and awards (UKRI 2021b).

There are also emerging examples of measures to reform the **research funding process**, alongside support for researchers to develop inclusive research methods. Individuals taking part in the FRQ peer review process will be encouraged to take a short online training course and EDI principles will be included as an evaluation criterion for regular grant programmes. In Ireland the Health Research Board (HRB) supports the [INCLUDE Ethnicity Framework](#), which aims to improve the quality and inclusiveness of clinical trials and methods. The Framework aims to help trial teams to consider different ethnic groups in trials, and methods of mitigating any associated challenges. In the UK, the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) (EPSRC) has funded projects examining inclusive approaches to research, including methods and research teams. At the European level, the Horizon 2020 funded Expert Group [Gendered Innovations](#) explores intersectional dimensions in areas like artificial intelligence, energy and urban planning, and provides methodological tools for applying sex, gender and intersectional analysis in research projects.

Research funding organisations have also provided **funding for projects and initiatives**, which support structural and organisational change in research organisations, and advance knowledge and understanding of discrimination and under-representation. A good example of this is the US National Science Foundation's **ADVANCE programme**, which funds the development of innovative organisational change strategies to enhance gender equity in STEM academics in non-profit institutions of higher education. The programme highlights the importance of embedding intersectional dimensions in the work that it supports, in particular race and ethnicity. Further, in the Netherlands, as part of the delivery of the national strategy, the Dutch Research Council (NWO) aims to support the development of a centre of excellence on equality and diversity in R&I. In addition, there are a range of examples of research funding into experiences of discrimination, many of which support deep insight into experiences and patterns of inequality in society, employment and education settings, including evolving perspectives on identity and intersectional experiences of discrimination. For example, the **Magnus Hirschfeld Foundation**, Berlin, was founded by the Federal government as an independent research institute on sexual and gender diversity. The institutes mission includes exploring the interconnections with other characteristics in different social, economical, cultural and political contexts, including an educational project on "Refugees and Queers", funded by the Federal Agency for Civic Education.

### 3.3 RPO actions

There were a wide range of inclusive GEPs at RPOs in the selection that was reviewed for this research. Of the 33 of the organisations that responded to the call for examples of inclusive GEPs, 31 reported that their work addressed more than one characteristic (including gender). In addition to gender, the characteristics most frequently addressed by the RPOs were disability, racial and ethnic minorities, refugees and migrant background, and sexual orientation and gender identity (**Figure 2**). Other groups noted in the responses included groups covered by social dimension policies, including mature learners, students in care, and geography. Amongst the responses the most common issues that were being addressed were prejudice, discrimination, and harassment (28), talent pipeline (including access to undergraduate study), career progression (27), and accessible and inclusive working environments (27) (**Figure 3**). Most of the responses included organisational action plans or strategy (32) that included some form of training and capacity development (30), and dedicated resources (29) (**Figure 4**). Many examples also included a specific project or targeted intervention (26), and a campaign or awareness-raising programmes (26). Only 15 indicated that targets or quotas had been set in relation to recruitment or leadership, and most of these appeared to be focused on gender.



**Figure 2** Groups or characteristics addressed by RPOs through inclusive GEPs (n=33) (source: call for examples)

### TOPICS ADDRESSED BY RPOs THROUGH INCLUSIVE GEPs

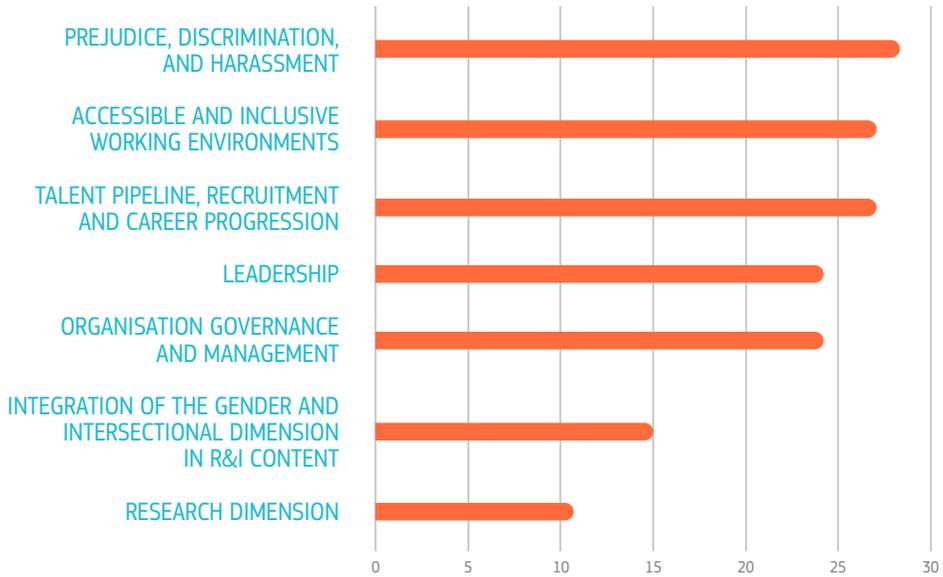


Figure 3 Topics addressed by RPOs through inclusive GEPs (n=33) (source: call for examples)

### TYPES OF ACTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS IN RPO INCLUSIVE GEPs

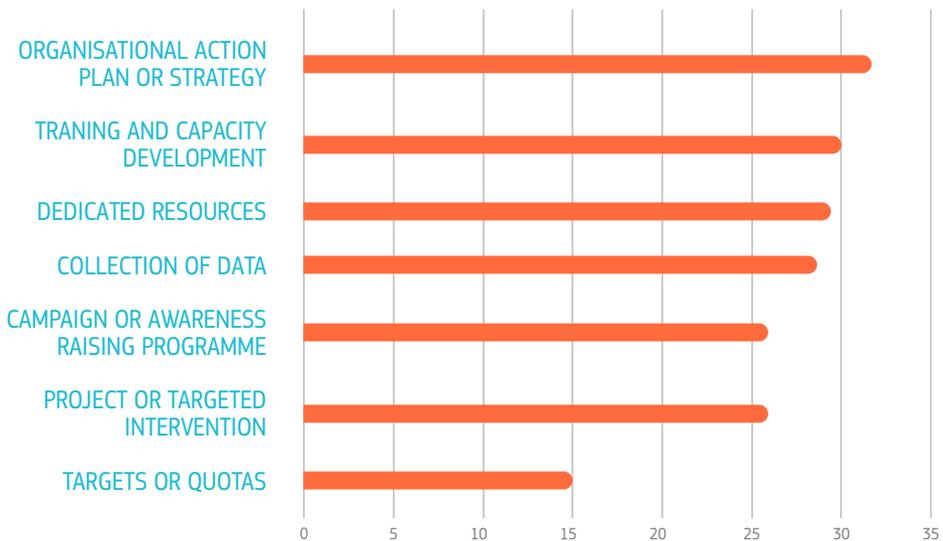


Figure 4 Types of actions and interventions in RPO inclusive GEPs (n=33) (source: call for examples)

When reviewing examples of actions taken by RPOs, including those submitted in response to the call and those identified through desk research, it emerged that a number have developed strategic action plans that address the inclusion of multiple groups at risk of bias or discrimination. These types of strategic action plans are integrated into the organisation's strategy, are supported by resources, articulate clear objectives, and are supported by clear actions that address equality of diverse groups in specific or identifiable terms. Examples of these types of actions include the plans developed by [Maynooth University \(Ireland\)](#), [Trinity College Dublin \(Ireland\)](#), [Vilnius University \(Lithuania\)](#), [Bocconi University \(Italy\)](#), [Heidelberg University \(Germany\)](#), [Radboud University \(Netherlands\)](#), [Utrecht University \(Netherlands\)](#), and international universities such as the [University of Birmingham \(UK\)](#) and the [University of Ottawa \(Canada\)](#) (see **Box 5** for an overview of some of these examples). These examples aim to go **beyond general diversity and inclusion statements**, are supported by clearly defined objectives and supporting actions in relation to different characteristics, but with integrated strategic direction and implementation.

## EXAMPLES OF RPO STRATEGIC ACTION PLANS AND APPROACHES

### BOX 5

**Birmingham University's (UK)** [Annual EDI Action Plan](#), as part of the [Equality Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Scheme 2021-2024](#), clearly outlines targeted actions undertaken each year to create an inclusive environment, dismantle structural barriers, and integrate EDI across the University's activities. The specific actions are underpinned by the University's [Fairness and Diversity Policy](#) and are co-coordinated by the [College EDI Officers and Committees](#) and the [Equality Change Programme \(EPC\) Workstreams](#), in alignment with the [Athena Swan Charter](#). The approach comprises of complex strategies and initiatives targeting specific groups, including the LGBTQ+ community, Black, Asian and minority ethnic people, and people with disabilities.

**Bocconi University's (Italy)** [Inclusive Gender Equality Plan](#), [Bocconi University](#) commits to offering all members of its community equality of opportunity and treatment, irrespective of personal characteristics and background, embedding this commitment across all activities of the University through dedicated metrics and indicators. The implementation of the plan is overseen by the Dean of Diversity and Inclusion, diversity delegates in each department, and three university committees on which both staff and students are represented. The plan's key objectives include increasing the visibility of diverse role models, embedding diversity in the selection, hiring and retention of students, staff and faculty, and developing inclusive teaching programmes.

**Heidelberg University (Germany)** published a [Diversity Strategy \(2012-2017\)](#) which includes guiding principles and targets with related actions and key performance indicators, encompassing several dimensions of diversity: age, gender, family, cultural background and worldview, social background, health and disability. Action targeting single characteristics also exist within the realm of the approach, specifically in relation to refugees, women and carers.

**Maynooth University (Ireland)** has an [Office of the Vice President for Equality & Diversity](#), which oversees the University's EDI strategy – outlined in the [Strategic Plan 2018-22](#) – and is responsible for realising “the University's core values of equality, inclusiveness, social justice, dignity and respect, and to fulfil its obligations in these area”. This broad commitment is also underpinned by a series of specific actions and plans in relation to different characteristics, including projects relating to sexual harassment, disability, intersectionality, LGBTQIA+, parents and carers and race equality, as well as developing cross-cutting tools to support actions, and internal EDI project funding opportunities.

**Radboud University's (Netherlands)** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan 2021-2025 aims to promote a safe and inclusive campus society that embraces diversity and social justice. The approach considers diversity, equality and inclusion as starting points for education, research and impact. Gender, disability, migrant background and refugee status, LGBTQI+ and gender identity are specifically addressed by the strategy. The DEI Steering Committee coordinates the work of the decentralised DEI committees present in each faculty.

**Trinity College Dublin's (Ireland)** Strategy for Diversity and Inclusion (SDI) 2014-2019 is framed around several key pieces of legislation: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Equality Acts 1998-2011; the Equal Status Acts 2000-2012; the Universities Act 1997; and the Disability Act 2005. In connection to the overarching College Strategy 2014-2019, the approach sets out specific EDI goals with the aim of creating an inclusive, diverse and pluralist college community, accompanied by a detailed framework outlining performance indicators, targeted actions, and deliverables required.

**University of Ottawa's (Canada)** EDI Action Plan for Research plan identifies strategies and actions that strengthen institutional commitment to EDI in research and create an inclusive climate for the university's researchers, graduates students, trainees and research personnel. The strategy is overseen by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation and addresses five key under-represented groups: women, indigenous peoples, visible minorities/racialised persons, LGBTQI2S+ community [2S refers to people who fall under a traditional third gender or variant in some Indigenous North American cultures], and persons with disabilities.

**Utrecht University (Netherlands)**, through its EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025, outlines the plans, objectives and actions taken by the organisation to "make a visible contribution to an inclusive university community, to a just society, and to equal rights and equal opportunities for all" through EDI, which is viewed as a central starting point for the policy domains of education, research and impact. The Action Plan sets out five key objectives, with several related key performance indicators and examples of actions in relation to different dimensions of inequality: age, LGBTQ+, cultural, ethnic or religious background, gender and disability – with more emphasis being placed in recent years on ethnic and cultural background.

**Vilnius University's (Lithuania)** Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy 2020-2025 aims to create a study and work environment at the University that promotes individual, social and cultural diversity and ensures equal opportunities for members of the University's community. It notes a connection to international human and civil rights law, laws of the Republic of Lithuania, the University's governing framework and strategy for 2018-2024. The overarching strategy is then supported by an implementation plan for the period of 2020-2022. This plan outlines clearly defined objectives for the implementation of the strategy in relation to the key target groups, gender, disability and foreign students and staff.



**Links to national policy frameworks or collective sector initiatives** can be clearly identified in many of the examples reviewed for this research. For example, actions being taken by RPOs in Norway and the Netherlands are clearly linked to national policy frameworks, initiatives, and guidelines. Accordingly, **Radboud University's** (Netherlands) strategy is explicitly aligned with the Dutch National action plan for greater diversity and inclusion in higher education and research and the international Diversity Charter. In other cases, strategic approaches may be noticeably influenced by EDI national-level strategies, although this is not explicitly expressed, such as in the case of the **University of Bergen's** (Norway) Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (2017–2022) and **Utrecht University's** (Netherlands) EDI Strategy and Action Plan. In Ireland, actions are both informed by general national policy frameworks in relation to marginalised groups as well as support from national authorities and the Advance HE Race Equality Charter (**Box 6**), whereas in the UK, EDI schemes and actions align with the aims and principles of the Athena Swan Charter.

## EXAMPLES OF COLLECTIVE RPO INITIATIVES

### BOX 6

**The Advance HE Race Equality Charter (REC)**, which is used in both the Irish and UK research sectors, is an organisational development framework and award aimed at RPOs that supports organisations to develop and implement commitments to address race equality and institutional culture. The REC covers a number of areas, including professional and support staff, academic staff, student progression and awarding, and diversity of the curriculum. The REC builds on similar principles to those contained in the Athena Swan programme and is frequently delivered in parallel by R&I organisations. It has been found to have positive impacts on race equality outcomes in R&I settings (Bhopal & Henderson 2019a; Advance HE 2021). Moving forward key issues that have been noted include ensuring clear and coherent approaches to data collection, ensuring senior level support, aligning the REC and Athena Swan processes, and ensuring that charters became a driver of change rather than procedural exercises.

**The Standing Conference of Equality and Diversity Officers or Assimilated Missions of Higher Education and Research Institutions** – CPED – in France has developed advice and guidance on the Prevention of Discrimination in Higher Education (CPED-AFMD), including the publication of a toolkit with examples of actions being taken by French universities. Characteristics addressed in the guide and examples include:

- Gender equality and sexist and sexual violence
- Sexual orientation and gender identities
- Origin and religion
- Disability
- Other criteria relating to discrimination, such as economic vulnerability, physical appearance or trade union membership.

A step being taken by RPOs appears to be the **extension of sexual harassment policies** to include sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as the introduction of broader **codes of conduct** that establish expectations of behaviour when working and studying. The Horizon 2020 funded UniSAFE project is developing advice and guidance on addressing gender-based violence, including intersectional dimensions (**Box 7**). There are also a range of examples of steps being taken by RPOs to address harassment that were identified through this work, the **University of Manchester** (UK) ran the award-winning 'We Get It' campaign about acceptable conduct that was focused on staff and students, allied to enhancements in reporting arrangements for harassment. **Radboud University's** Code of conduct aims to combat discrimination, intimidation and racism, and is based on equality for the LGBTQI+ community, individuals from all age groups and social classes, and disabled and neurodiverse individuals. At the **University of Heidelberg** (Germany), the Rectorate's Commission on Fair Conduct deals with cases of bullying, stalking, discrimination, and sexual harassment as part of the university's overall commitment to inclusion and fair conduct. Further, the University's Senate Guideline on Fair Conduct complements existing regulations concerning the protection of members of staff, such as the General Equal Treatment Act and the State University Law.

### THE UNISAFE PROJECT

### BOX 7

The UniSAFE project, funded by Horizon 2020, examines the prevalence of gender-based violence, including newly emerging forms of violence, in universities and research performing organisations. Early outputs from this work highlight that national measures to address sexual harassment in R&I are rare or less well developed (Fajmonová et al 2021). At the RPO level there are more examples of codes of conduct that address harassment and gender-based violence (Huck et al 2022). Few measures explicitly address intersectional dimensions, either at the national or RPO level, but where they do, policies tend to focus on sexual orientation and ethnicity. The results from the project will be translated into policy recommendations and a toolbox for universities and research organisations. Further information can be found at [www.unisafe-gbv.eu](http://www.unisafe-gbv.eu)

There are numerous examples of research organisations undertaking **positive campaigns and awareness-raising events**. This includes work focused on diversity generally and in relation to specific characteristics, most notably sexual orientation and race and ethnicity. Awareness-raising is typically part of the creation of inclusive environments for learning and work, as well as being embedded in efforts to promote research careers to socially disadvantaged groups. For example, **Heidelberg University** has organised a campus-wide campaign 'Show Respect, Promote Diversity, Work Together' focused on topics such as discrimination, bullying, cyberbullying and sexual harassment. **University of Cologne** (Germany) runs a diversity week with the goal of raising awareness of diversity and specific issues relating to equality and inclusion.

The **University of Utrecht** - in addition to celebrating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, International Women's Day and Coming Out Day annually – organises two Diversity Months in March and October, with a range of public-facing events, training, a Diversity and Inclusion award, Diversity Day, the Week of Accessibility, and Safety Week. The organisation also hosts the Black Lives Matter @UU: Creating Change with events on topics such as racism in higher education and micro-aggression in the work place. **Birmingham University** also raises awareness through its annual Black History Month celebrations, which in 2021 involved a wide range of events framed around the theme of 'Proud To Be...'; in addition to the awareness-raising events organised within the LGBTQ+ History Month. **Radboud University** celebrates the Anti-Racism Awareness Week, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Solidarity Week, and organises an annual DEI Symposium. **Maynooth University** recently hosted its Social justice Week 2022, which involved a programme of events organised by staff and students to raise awareness of global and national challenges relating to social justice. **The University of Oslo** (Norway), participates in the Oslo Pride and the Sami national day.

The introduction of **diversity training**, including unconscious biases, is also a common step being taken by RPOs as part of strategic change programmes. For example, **Maynooth University's Equality and Diversity Training and Development** programme includes training on Gender Identity Awareness, Bias Awareness, and Equality in Recruitment. **Trinity College Dublin's** (Ireland) diversity and inclusion strategy, which formed part of the college's 2014-2019 strategic plan, set targets for the number of staff who have undertaken equality and diversity training. This target was a performance indicator for the objective of informing and educating the university community in relation to diversity and inclusion, and to ensuring particularly that frontline staff, line management and senior leadership receive appropriate development in managing diversity. This activity is also supported by a range of current training and development resources for staff, including resources on race equality, unconscious bias, cultural intelligence, and disability. At **Radboud University**, DEI Staff Ambassadors are a network of staff who are supported to develop their knowledge of equality issues and mobilise action across the university.

Several organisations have undertaken **consultation exercises** to engage with staff and students as part of the development of their action plans (**Box 10**). For example, the **University of Ottawa** conducted a consultation through interviews, focus groups, online surveys and online panels, involving Faculty Vice-Deans, Research Advisors, Canada Research Chairholders, and researchers from designated groups: women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. In many cases, independent staff and student networks that are recognised and supported by the RPO have played an essential role in challenging organisations and placing equality issues onto the agenda for senior leaders and governing bodies. For example, the **University of Birmingham** (UK) has a Race Equality Network, Rainbow Network, and Enabling Staff Network, that are open to all staff and research students and highlight issues of race, LGBTQ+ and disability at the university. Similarly at the **University of Utrecht**, staff and student networks include the African and Caribbean Heritage Network, Studying without Limitations (for students with psychological or physical disabilities), the Network USP Inclusive (for employees with a (work) disability or (mental) vulnerability). Utrecht also participates in Accessible Academia which is an inter-university network for students and staff with functional disabilities in the Netherlands.

Building on the support offered by research funding bodies, some RPOs also support **schemes to diversify entry to research careers** for socially disadvantaged groups. These include general initiatives to recruit and support higher education students generally and specifically in relation to doctoral study to support entry into R&I careers. **University of Utrecht** offers support for applicants to the NWO Mozaiek 2.0 programme by the Dutch Research Council, offering 12 PhD funded positions and additional not-funded positions to researchers from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Turkey in the Netherlands, and also supports an additional 5 PhD positions for eligible applicants in the science programme that do not win funding from the NWO. It also offers mentoring and guidance support through network meetings, an interview training course, as well of temporary positions. RPOs also undertake measures to support refugees, including scholars at risk (**Box 8**).

## BOX 8

### EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED RESEARCHERS

A number of higher education organisations are taking proactive steps to support and integrate displaced researchers and students. Through the UniCa4Refugees, the **University of Cagliari** (Italy) facilitates procedures to recognise access qualifications to university studies and waives tuition fees for refugees. **Swissuniversities** (Switzerland) facilitates access to tertiary education for refugees by clarifying refugees' qualifications, recording education background, and qualifying measures for admission. ENIC NARIC also hosts a toolkit on recognition of qualifications held by refugees.

Scholars at Risk Europe, is an international network which supports and coordinates the activities of Scholars at Risk national sections and partner networks across Europe. Scholars at Risk supports scholars who are at risk, by arranging temporary research and teaching positions at institutions as well as by providing advisory and referral services.

The Science4Refugees initiative and the EURAXESS portal provide research refugee friendly internships, part-time and full-time jobs, and access to a European Research Community. Researchers of Ukraine are eligible to benefit from the Science4Refugees initiative without the need of holding the refugee status.

Similarly, there are a range of **research centres** that address the experiences of social groups and backgrounds, including equality and diversity practice and experiences in research and innovation. **Maynooth University's Race Equity Forum** works with the library to decolonise the library collection and explore which texts should be included, in addition to working to create spaces for minority ethnic students and staff to be consulted on decisions made by the university through a new equality analysis system. At **Trinity College Dublin**, the **Inclusive Curriculum Project – Trinity INC** embeds principles of diversity, equality and inclusion across all curricula. The **University of Cagliari** (Italy) has set up **Accessibility Labs**, research centres and laboratories that aim to foster an inclusive society for disabled people. The Labs deal with the theme of physical and cognitive accessibility, offering research and teaching through seminars, conventions, projects, publications, with an interdisciplinary approach with the aim of discussing different aspects of accessibility.



There are also examples of actions to promote **inclusive teaching and learning**, including measures being undertaken to review curricula, and reviews of teaching and assessment practices. In the Netherlands, **Radboud University's** DEI Steering Committee offers advice on the adaptation of curricula from a DEI perspective. The two-year project **Developing an Inclusive Curriculum and Learning Environment**, funded by the **University of Utrecht's Education Incentive Fund (USO)**, has since 2020 been reviewing the curriculum for all Utrecht University degree programmes in order to embed the existing **Toolbox Diversity in Education**, a tool for lecturers and teachers to incorporate diversity work in educational practices. The goal is to promote diversity and inclusiveness among students and employees by developing a course and curriculum reflection toolbox to be used by course coordinators, lecturers and programme coordinators. The **Advance HE Race Equality Charter** encourages measures to address attainment gaps, including initiatives to decolonise curricula. Other related examples can be found at **Bocconi University** (Italy), which offers multiple exam sessions, which enable students who cannot attend an exam for cultural or religious reasons to take it during a different session. In Austria, the Universities Act and the Universities of Applied Sciences Studies Act **provide for the right to a different examination method** if taking the examination in the prescribed method is not possible due to a disability.

There are multiple examples of actions being taken in relation to **inclusive facilities** and accessibility. Actions include physical accessibility of buildings and venues, including campus buildings, parking spots, toilets, in addition to the accessibility of digital platforms, gender-neutral toilets, and prayer facilities for different religions. For example, the **University of Bergen's (Norway) Diversity and inclusion action plan 2017–2022** commits the organisation to universal design for disability in its facilities, and to selling buildings which cannot be adapted for universal design purposes. The plan also commits the university to providing access to gender-neutral toilets across the campus. **Bocconi University (Italy)** established an interfaith area in 2012 providing a place for prayer for followers of different religions, which also has the objective of promoting dialogue and discussion of religions and cultures. Higher education organisations have also reviewed accessibility of digital and online education and learning tools for students with disabilities. See for example the **Open University of Catalunya (Spain)**, which has an **accessibility programme** to assist the coordination of all of the work of the university, which delivers much of its activities online.

Actions to support **recruitment and career progression** of researchers and staff from diverse backgrounds other than gender are less common at the RPO level. However, there are various examples of general diversity training initiatives to address unconscious bias as well as measures and policies to ensure fair and transparent recruitment processes. In addition, there are also numerous examples of policies relating to arrangements to support applications from disabled candidates. However, there are few interventions that include specific targets for representation of specific groups. One example is **Maynooth University**, which met the statutory target of 3% of employees with disabilities in 2019, with 4.9% of staff having disclosed disabilities. The **University of Essex** (UK) aims to have **no significant pay gaps (<5%) in relation to protected characteristics by 2025**. Whilst a number of RPOs also make general commitments to improving representation and diversity in senior leadership roles, such as the University of Essex and the University of Birmingham, the extent to which this extends to dimensions other than gender is not clear.

## 4 DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE GEPs

This section examines emerging themes that were identified from the review of inclusive GEPs (gender equality plans), including through input from stakeholders and the round table, organised in March 2022. It examines how different models of inclusive GEPs have been employed by organisations at different stages of development to initiate and progress a broader range of actions, and the availability of data to support this work. It then examines the common steps that have been identified through this review and how they can be integrated into structural approaches to change. It suggests that inclusive GEPs should address intersectional dimensions of inequality as part of nuanced understandings of diversity and inclusion. However, it is also likely to be the case that actions that address the experiences of specific groups at risk of bias or discrimination will also be required in order to drive meaningful change. Data will be an important element to support this process, but the perceived lack of data should not be used as an impediment for action as the experience of gender equality actions indicates that change is a long-term process. Crucially, the active involvement and support of minority groups in R&I will be crucial to the success of any action, including gathering data on inequalities and discrimination and evaluating success.

### 4.1 Approaches

Inclusive gender equality actions in R&I are in the relatively **early stages of development** across Member States and Associated countries. At the national level only a relatively small number of Member States and funding bodies have adopted national-level actions focused on R&I that address characteristics other than gender. Although there are a wider range of examples at the RPO level, the sample presented in this report captures activity being taken by ‘early movers’ and is not representative of the extent to which action is being taken by RPOs more generally. In practice it can be reasonably assumed that whilst there are many more RPOs that are taking relevant actions, they remain a relatively small proportion of the RPO sector across Europe. It should be noted that the precise scope of actions being taken, both at national level and by RPOs, is nuanced by intersections with the social dimension of higher education actions, as well as non-discrimination laws or action plans that apply to R&I organisations as employers. However, in practice inclusive approaches to gender equality that are focused on the R&I sector and address characteristics other than gender are comparatively limited.

Whilst only one of the organisations that was reviewed as part of this work explicitly titled its plan an inclusive gender equality plan (Bocconi University), almost all the examples that address multiple characteristics can be traced through some **prior gender equality activity**. In all the plans reviewed at national level and among RPOs and RFOs, gender actions were the most developed, with the widest range of interventions, including targets in relation to employment and leadership, which were not found in relation to other characteristics. At the national level for example, the Norwegian action in relation to ethnicity has built on prior actions to support gender equality. The Committee helped to raise and widen awareness in relation to ethnicity and inequality in R&I that built on growing attention to the issue in parts of the sector. Similarly, in the Netherlands whilst the national action plan covers a range of characteristics, the most developed area is in relation to gender equality. At the RFO level, whilst there are few examples of strategic actions, where activities are developing tend to build on existing gender equality actions, such as the planned update of Science Europe’s [Guide to Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations](#).

The clear and continued emphasis on gender reflects the longer-term policy focus in European R&I sectors and the persistent gender inequalities in European R&I<sup>19</sup>. Notably however, almost all the RPO level actions that were submitted through the call were described in terms of **diversity and inclusion**, including those focused only on gender. Further, almost all actions reviewed through this work make some form of reference to diversity and inclusion as part of their guiding rationale. For example, amongst **RPOs** that responded to the call for examples, 28 labelled their action as equality, diversity and inclusion actions that aimed to address multiple characteristics. In many cases strategic documents and supporting material also included framing commentary about what is meant by equality, diversity and inclusion. For example, the Radboud action plan examines the nuances of personal identity and patterns of discrimination and exclusion and how these may interact within organisational and social settings and the challenges these present for creating equal and inclusive environments.

These findings, including stakeholder feedback, suggest that many organisations have sought to extend their gender equality concept by articulating an approach to **positively value and welcome different personal identities and cultures**. As illustrated by the Radboud example, these types of approaches emphasise the creation of shared values and identities, usually within a liberal cultural and rights-based framework. The prominence of diversity campaigns in the work of many organisations also highlights the key role that celebration and awareness-raising around the experiences and perspectives of different social groups can play in inclusive gender equality policies and plans. In this respect, diversity and inclusion approaches can provide a flexible framework for examining and reforming the cultural assumptions and norms within an organisation. This flexibility includes consideration of different patterns and histories of diversity and inequality in national contexts, the diversity and fluidity of personal identities, and the different layers of intersectional experiences.



The value and relevance of a more nuanced approach was noted by several stakeholders who provided input into to this study. A broader approach to diversity and identity and was often considered to align with the priorities of students at higher education organisations. In many cases **student advocacy** has prioritised broader based equalities actions that address multiple identities and characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender identity, and race and ethnicity. This agenda includes an understanding of the intersectional dimensions of inequalities and discrimination as part of complex multi-layered personal and social identities, and growing attention on the socio-cultural dimensions of inequalities, alongside structural or organisational dimensions. Measures typically build on approaches that have been developed through gender equalities actions, such as unconscious bias and gendered language, and aim to address norms and assumptions that are rooted in patriarchal, hetero normative or racialised cultures. Illustrative examples include steps to address micro-aggressions, promote safe spaces, the use of gender-neutral pronouns, and student led efforts to decolonise curricula.

Crucially however, in some cases this approach was presented as a step towards extending actions addressing other social characteristics beyond gender (see for example **Box 8**). Further examination of examples identified through this review suggests that statements relating to equality and diversity, particularly among **RFOs and RPOs**, were **not always supported by clearly identifiable actions** that address the inclusion of groups other than gender. For example, following further examination through desk research, half of the RPO examples were assessed to have discernible actions in relation to characteristics other than gender, with only a smaller sub-set clearly integrated into a comprehensive plan. In these cases gender equality plans had been extended conceptually into what may be described as Gender+. This includes actions, such as diversity training or the establishment of committees, or awareness-raising activities, but which were not yet clearly integrated into an organisational strategy or plan with associated objectives or targets other than for gender.

<sup>19</sup> The prominence of gender in organisational actions reviewed during this work will in part be influenced by the targeted call for examples that focused on organisations that had a GEP in place. However, the overall finding is corroborated by previous review of equality and diversity actions in the higher education sector and R&I and in stakeholder feedback to this work. See for example LERU, EUA and UKRI

**Intersectionality** was acknowledged as a concept and in general terms as part of approaches to diversity, but it was **less significant or explicit in the actual design of actions**. There are some examples of specifically intersectional actions, primarily in relation to diversifying entry into higher education and research careers, harassment policies, and research agendas. However, whilst intersectionality is commonly acknowledged as an organising principle, and may be embedded in the delivery of some actions, there were relatively few specifically intersectional interventions in the examples reviewed through this research that moved beyond generic or pan-equality approaches (see Christoffersen 2021). Where intersectionality has been included, such as in the Athena Swan gender equality award scheme, it has enabled a more nuanced approach to gender equality actions but it has not been credited with driving substantial change in relation to other characteristics, in particular race and ethnicity (Advance HE 2018). This suggests that whilst intersectional elements are essential for enhancing the impact and sophistication of equality actions, they may not always be sufficient to drive change in relation to patterns of inequality that are linked to specific characteristics.

These themes suggests that **Gender+ approaches can provide an important starting point** for broadening the scope of gender equality actions. Furthermore, diversity and inclusion approaches can provide an important guiding principle and goal for inclusive GEPs and intersectionality an important method for understanding patterns of discrimination and designing interventions. This includes opportunities to build on existing mandates and organisational capabilities, whilst providing a conceptual framework to develop work across multiple strands of discrimination. However, intersectional approaches also appear to be less well developed or understood in terms of guiding organisational actions and change. In this context, **diversity or generic intersectional approaches can risk becoming overly generalised**, with limited or superficial performative activities that are not supported by clear objectives. Furthermore, a more generalised approach, or one that does not directly engage with the specific experiences and outcomes of groups, can also fail to address different patterns of discrimination or give different dimensions sufficient attention, including gender inequality.

The most developed examples in RPOs had clear strands of activity with associated objectives that addressed **specific characteristics**. These may be part of integrated strategies, for example at the University of Birmingham or Vilnius University, and progress through specific initiatives, such as at Maynooth University. In addition, actions focused on a specific characteristic also appear to be a feature at the national level. In both Norway and Ireland, national action was focused on racial and ethnic equality. Furthermore, in Ireland, work by RPOs has been supported by the Race Equality Charter, a sector-led initiative through Advance HE. Many of the schemes to diversify participation in R&I through scholarships were focused on specific groups, such as disability in the case of France and migrant background in the Netherlands. As already noted, there are initiatives focused on diversifying entry into higher education more generally which address intersectional characteristics. For example, the Mission MINT programme addresses the participation of women in higher education from disadvantaged backgrounds more generally, which includes a strand focused on women from a migrant background.

The strength of single characteristic approaches is that they enable **focused action targeted on specific experiences and drivers of inequality** (Bhopal & Henderson 2019b). In practice these approaches may address intersecting factors but they foreground the role that certain characteristics and identities play in shaping the experiences of groups and individuals. At national or sector level in particular, single characteristic approaches can provide a framework for action across a range of complex structural issues, such as in relation to race and ethnicity, which includes a range of structural educational and socio-economic factors. Furthermore, a focus on specific characteristics can help organisations to engage with specific prejudices in more meaningful ways. At the same time the widespread adoption of diversity and inclusion frameworks, especially at in RPOs, also illustrates a growing concern that single characteristic approaches can be overly narrow and can single out one dimension of an individual's multi-faceted highly personal, and professional, identities. As a result, these types of focused approaches should be developed with care and nuance, with high levels of stakeholder engagement, and as part of broader change programmes.

Stakeholders and participants at the round table held as part of this research also noted that single characteristic approaches can create **silos of activity** in organisational contexts. This may limit sharing the learning and outcomes of practice and identifying where relevant intersections may be found. Most organisations, certainly in the case of RPOs, and in national frameworks, for example the Netherlands, have established **integrated steering-groups** to guide action plans that embed multiple perspectives into the work.

Similarly, in Norway the emphasis on race and ethnicity in practice has been taken forward by advice and guidance in relation to equality and diversity more generally, including actions that address other characteristics. In addition, in organisational contexts units with responsibility for progressing gender equality actions have expanded their remit to reflect a broader scope of strategies. In this respect the integration of governance and operational delivery of actions is an important measure for breaking down silos. However, **the capacity to fully consider and support action in relation to different areas of inequality** will be an important consideration when taking an integrated approach.

At this stage of the development of inclusive GEPs, the main challenge facing many R&I organisations appears to be **ensuring that general commitments to diversity and inclusion are supported by clear actions** that address the experiences and outcomes of specific groups. At the national or system level, action in R&I and more generally has primarily been framed around driving systemic change, including participation and outcomes of groups from marginalised backgrounds, in particular race and ethnicity. In this context, multi-stranded action that considers specific characteristics can help to drive focused change that addresses systemic factors. However, where single characteristic approaches are adopted, it is important that diversity within the strand, including gender dimensions, are clearly embedded into their design. At the RPO level general diversity and inclusion approaches, as well as intersectional lenses, can provide a better organising framework that aligns with the experiences of staff and students, but which should be supported by clear action and objectives in relation to specific characteristics where identified.

## 4.2 Equality data



The collection of data, including quantitative and qualitative data, about discrimination and inequality in R&I will be a fundamental pillar of the development of inclusive approaches to gender equality. The [She Figures series](#) and associated data collection has played an important role in providing insight into gender-based inequalities in R&I. In addition, the [She Figures 2021 policy brief](#) on intersectionality also highlights good practices for intersectional equality data, whilst acknowledging that intersectional indicators and comparable equality data for other characteristics is not yet available (European Commission 2021b). Nevertheless, the Policy Brief and this review highlight examples of relevant data collection and research activities. In the UK, for example, the Higher Education Statistics Agency collects annual data on R&I staff, including ethnicity, disability, and age. The Norwegian and Dutch national authorities have put in place, or plan to put in place, arrangements for the collection of data in relation to migrant background as a proxy for race and ethnicity ([Box 9](#)). Whilst there are no examples of regular national data collections in R&I relating to sexual orientation, gender identity or religion, this does not preclude conducting specific survey research exercises to establish understanding, as has been done in relation to race and ethnicity in Ireland and Norway.

### EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

#### BOX 9

In **Norway**, data on immigrants and descendants of immigrants among researchers and academic staff, including technical and administrative staff and managers with higher education, in Norwegian research and higher education is published through a cooperative project between the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education and Statistics Norway (SSB). Data has been published in 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2018. This data also presents intersectional analysis of migrant origin by gender. The KIF also commissioned an independent report by the Work Research Institute (2016), titled '[being a foreigner is no advantage](#)'. The report examined experiences and patterns of inequality linked to ethnicity which informed recommendations and helped to guide equalities actions by Norwegian R&I organisations.

The **UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)** publishes data on age, disability and ethnicity by HE provider, occupation classification and for academic staff. **UKRI** also collects data on the gender, ethnicity and disability of applicants for research funding and presents analysis of trends in regular reports.

This data is now informing the development of a new equality and diversity strategy and associated actions to enhance the diversity of the research sector. Advance HE also publishes annual statistical reports on equality in higher education, which includes data on staff and students, although this is only available for Advance HE member organisations to enable them to benchmark themselves against comparable organisations.

In Ireland, the **Irish Higher Education Authority** published survey research on race equality in higher education (HEA 2019). Science Foundation Ireland has reported plans to collect baseline data for the protected groups in Ireland, including race, gender identity and sexual orientation (LGBTQI+), refugees, disability, gender, as well as marital status, family status, age, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. After baseline data is collected, an analysis will be performed to identify areas of focus for promoting equality in these areas. In addition, to assess the impact of measures to diversity in entry into higher education, the Equal Access Survey in Higher Education collects data on participation from students across the various statutory areas of equality on the social, economic and ethnic background of students entering higher education for the first time. It includes gathering information on age, gender, normal country of domicile and disability.

Many national authorities already collect data on the background of students in order to monitor the impact of measures to diversify entry into higher education. FRA regularly collects national equalities data across a range of characteristics, including experiences in education and employment. Data in relation to access and participation of under-represented students in higher education is also collected and presented as the Bologna Process implementation report series. These reports include analysis of student characteristics in higher education, including in relation to gender, migrant background, and social background (Eurydice 2020). However, as noted previously, the Bologna implementation reports also note the issue of different approaches to the categorisation of migrant background between Member States and the conflation of internationally mobile students and domestic students that should be addressed as part of any measures in relation to R&I.



## BOX 10

## EXAMPLES OF RPO EQUALITY DATA COLLECTION

**The University of Vilnius, Lithuania**, published a study of “[Diversity and Equal Opportunities in Vilnius University in 2018- 2019](#)” that informed the development of the University’s equality and diversity action plan and strategy. It also publishes [annual monitoring data](#) on gender, disability, age, citizenship, sexual orientation and religion and belief. **Bocconi University, Italy**, presents extensive data on the profile of staff and students as part of its [Inclusive Gender Equality plan](#). In both cases, data included statistical data about characteristics, survey data and qualitative feedback from staff and students, including through engagement forums, and included perceptions of inclusion based on different characteristics. Both strategies also commit to engaging with staff and students in the future, including to address potential sensitivities in relation to disclosure in order to expand data collection.

**Trinity College Dublin, Ireland**, publishes annual [Equality Monitoring Reports](#) that present data on staff and students and on equality in processes such as admissions, recruitment and promotion, including by age, civil status, disability, ethnicity, family status and gender, religion, nationality and sexual orientation. However, the reports note that reliable data is not available in relation to ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation, either because data cannot be shared or is not recorded, but indicative figures are presented.

**The University of Essex** [annual report](#) presents staff data, including on gender, sexual orientation, religion, race and disability by role. **Maynooth University** publishes regular reports on [Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Inter-culturalism](#) which include staff applicants by ethnicity.

**The University of Utrecht’s** [Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025](#) commits the university to developing integrated reporting of diversity data to gain insight into the student and staff population by gender, migration background, socio-economic background, LGBTQ+ and disability. It aims to increase insight into the backgrounds of the current student and staff population, including the publication of an annual report on data on students and staff with regard to migration background, functional disability, social class and LGBTQ+ (as far as possible), and participating in the [Cultural Diversity Barometer \(SER/CBS\)](#).

**The Gender Equality Audit and Monitoring (GEAM)** tool is an integrated environment for carrying out survey-based gender equality audits in academic organizations or organizational units. Its core instrument is a flexible questionnaire framework based upon the [Athena Survey of Science, Engineering and Technology \(ASSET\)](#) the GEAM has been developed by [Advance HE](#) (UK), [Notus](#) (Spain) and the Open University of Catalonia (Spain), in collaboration with the [ACT Consortium partners](#). The tool collects a range of data on personal characteristics that enables an intersectional approach to data analysis to be carried out on workplace climate and other aspects of R&I organisations.

At the RPO level, some organisations are starting to collect data to inform equality and diversity actions, including administrative HR data, as well as survey and consultation exercises (see **Box 10** and section 4.2 for further analysis of approaches to data collection). Of the 33 submissions from the call for examples, 15 RPOs replied that they had publicly available data. In practice, however, a much smaller sub-set of organisations presented data on characteristics for groups other than gender. Examples of RPO data collection include the collection and presentation of data on staff and students by different characteristics, including disability, including mental health, race and ethnicity, and geographical origin. Challenges that have been noted include:

- General issues in relation to poor quality of organisational data or limited capabilities for analysis of different characteristics.
- Concerns about potentially identifying individuals through presentation of small datasets, including when presenting intersectional data due to ‘mosaic’ effects.
- Potential reputational risks to the organisation, including to prospective and current staff and students, when presenting negative outcomes.

It should be stressed that the absence of systematic data should not be an impediment to taking action. An important step will be to conduct **research into inequalities in R&I organisations and systems**. Nevertheless, the importance of enhancing data on equalities at all levels has been noted as part of the European Union's equality strategies (**Box 11**). Initiatives reviewing equality data suggest whilst precise national legal frameworks differ there are no absolute prohibitions on the collection of equalities data, including in relation to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability (European Commission 2017). Rather, resistance to collecting data is typically linked to political positions and misunderstandings about legal frameworks, including GDPR (European Commission 2017). In practice, equality data can be collected through a variety of different methods, including voluntary disclosure through research at the national, RFO and RPO level. In this context a principal challenge for collecting equality data for most RPOs and RFO will be to ensure the trust and support of target groups when collecting sensitive data.

### GUIDELINES ON STEPS AND PRINCIPLES TO ENHANCE EQUALITY DATA

### BOX 11

The European Commission High Level Group on Non-discrimination, equality and diversity has published [guidelines on improving collection and use of equality data](#). The guidelines highlighted the following steps and principles to enhance equality data, as follows:

- **Map existing sources** of equality data and identify data gaps
- Foster **inter-institutional cooperation** in the collection and use of equality data
- Set up a **data hub** on equality and non-discrimination
- **Build institutional capacity** to collect robust and reliable equality data
- Facilitate effective use of equality data
- **Ensure comprehensiveness** of equality data
- **Mainstream equality data** into EU and national surveys
- Ensure regular and timely equality data collection
- Enhance **validity and reliability** of equality data
- Ensure **representativeness** of equality data
- **Improve comparability** of equality data

Further information about this work and measures to enhance equality data, including the round table on equality data, specific guidance on the collection of race and ethnicity data and the European handbook for equality data can be found on [the Commission website](#). In addition the FRA also hosts a [compendium of practices on equality data collection](#).

Moving forward, **the development of inclusive gender equality plans should include collection of data in relation to other characteristics**, such as race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, and socio-economic background, where possible. As part of these efforts, establishing a common lexicon for data and characteristics will enable comparisons of outcomes and experiences around Europe. This will be particularly important in relation to data on racial and ethnic minorities and staff, and 'migrant backgrounds', due to the internationally mobile nature of the R&I workforce. In addition, data collection and research should consider intersectional dimensions from the outset. Intersectional perspectives can inform reflexive understanding of experiences, improve the diversity of samples, and enable consideration of more than one equality field, including interactions (see for example Equality Challenge Unit 2017). Whilst smaller numbers can be an issue, rounding and anonymised qualitative analysis can enable the development of robust intersectional evidence that can guide equality actions.

## 4.3 Structural change



The experience of gender equality actions and the emerging examples reviewed here point to the importance of structural approaches when developing inclusive GEPs. Most of the actions reviewed in this study, at national RFO, and RPO levels, have only relatively recently begun to address social characteristics other than gender. Where evidence of impact of interventions is available, these typically relate to gender equality actions (**Box 11**). The experience of work to promote gender equality suggests that organisational changes and reforms are likely to take time and effort to produce measurable results. Furthermore, longer-term work would be required to **monitor progress** and **evaluate the impact** of actions against equalities objectives across different parts of the system. Evaluating impacts in complex change processes is inherently complex and benefits from the use of theory of change evaluation methods (see for example the Horizon 2020 funded EFFORTI framework for evaluating gender equality related interventions). Monitoring and evaluation also benefit from tracking of outcomes indicators, such as staff satisfaction and experiences, research funding and composition of research teams, and employment and leadership in research organisations.

Whilst in the early stages of development, the range of actions that have been developed to date signal the initial development of a structural approach to change. At the heart of this approach will be measures to engage and consult with marginalised groups. These measures are essential to **build trust** in the aims and objectives of actions, **including identifying problems, developing interventions, and evaluating impact**. The long-standing history of discrimination means that people from minority groups may not fully trust their employers or educators. Therefore, actions to address inequality (including the collection of equality data) may need foundational work to engage with these groups, understand their experiences of inequality, and critically, ensure the co-creation of actions to address those inequalities. Steps include establishing steering groups (for example the KIF in Norway), supporting staff networks (for example University of Birmingham), and undertaking consultation exercises (for example Bocconi University).

Actions, including consultations and associated interventions, that are focused on marginalised groups must be embedded in broader programmes for change or they risk being superficial and alienating (see for example Bhopal, 2019). **National policy or legal frameworks or initiatives** can help to enhance the coherence and quality of actions across multiple parts of the R&I system (Bencivenga & Drew 2021). National frameworks can support measures to access research careers, arrangements for collection of data, as well as coordinating resources to support action by R&I organisations. Effective action by RFOs and RPOs can take place in the absence of clear national frameworks for inclusion of marginalised groups in R&I. However, where these examples do exist, national frameworks, including government-led strategies such as in the case of the Netherlands, Austria, and Norway and Ireland as well as sector-led frameworks such as in the case of the Advance HE Race Equality Charter, do appear to increase the prevalence of actions, and the overall coherence and quality of these actions, including through the support of collaborative arrangements between organisations to share and benchmark practice.

Structural approaches to inclusive GEPs must also place at their heart **clear objectives**, including equalities outcomes, in order to drive change. Across the actions reviewed for the purposes of this research, the most developed outcomes and indicators identified were primarily focused on gender equality. For example, objectives in relation to the gender balance of organisations were relatively common, but there were almost no examples of equivalent objectives being set in relation to other characteristics. This situation in part reflects the respective histories of action, both in terms of social contexts and in R&I systems more specifically. However, moving forward, setting clear and transparent equality objectives will be an important part of moving action beyond general statements in support of equality and diversity. Setting clear objectives in partnership with marginalised groups is an important element for building trust in inclusive GEP actions, including through the enabling of transparency and accountability of commitments, as well as evaluation of the impact of measures.

The range of interventions that have been developed as part of inclusive GEPs highlighted through this research also signal the type of integrated measures that will be required to support institutional change. These measures clearly draw on the type of actions that have been developed through gender equality actions and whilst it will be important to consider the specifics of inequality and discrimination in relation to different characteristics, these areas provide a helpful framework for structural action. **Support to develop, share and guide effective practice** can be observed across the national examples that have been highlighted in this research, including in Norway, France, the Netherlands and Ireland, as well as in prior gender equality actions. Communities of practices, such as those developed through the Horizon 2020 [Project ACT](#), have proved effective in supporting the development and sharing of approaches to designing, implementing and evaluating equality practice. Areas for consideration when supporting the development of inclusive practices and policies include:

- **Codes of conduct:** a common measure is the extension of sexual harassment policies to incorporate other forms of harassment and discrimination through codes of conduct. These interventions are basic elements for establishing welcoming and inclusive R&I organisations and should address the particular features of the research and educational environment of R&I organisations. However, effective codes should be founded on active engagement with marginalised groups to understand experiences and encourage reporting and must be connected to broader measures to change in organisational cultures and behaviours.
- **Awareness-raising campaigns and training:** as with harassment policies, campaign and general diversity training are also important pillars in terms of raising positive awareness about social diversity and inclusion. Awareness-raising and training are also a fundamental element for increasing understanding of how inequalities can be embedded in organisations and relationships and can help to mobilise staff, and students, to lead change. However, these types of interventions can become performative or procedural unless they are also linked to substantive changes in organisational practices and cultures.
- **Entry and progression in R&I careers:** there is an emerging range of measures that aim to diversify entry and progress in R&I careers, building on work in relation to the social dimension of higher education. Interventions may include outreach, targeted scholarships for doctoral study, as well as early career researcher and leadership support and mentoring schemes. Leadership and mentoring schemes in particular can have positive benefits for researchers from marginalised backgrounds in the context of measures that address the drivers of unequal career outcomes for marginalised groups in R&I settings (Advance HE 2019; Bhopal 2019; UKRI 2020a).
- **Policies, practices, and cultures:** a key element of inclusive GEPs should concern a review of organisational policies, practices, language, and associated cultures, including funding policies, in partnership with marginalised groups to identify barriers and drivers of inequality. Some of the steps noted through this research included:
  - enhancing approaches to identifying and attracting diverse talent
  - methods for evaluating research and professional careers
  - flexible working and pastoral support arrangements
  - inclusive leadership and decision-making practices and cultures
  - accessibility of facilities for different groups.
- **Research dimension:** measures to support research on social inequalities, including intersectional experiences, as well as intersectional analysis in broader R&I content are an important factor for excellent research. In addition to funding inclusive research content and methods, it will also be important for **research funders** to consider how they can enhance insight into the characteristics of the type of research and researchers that they fund. This insight will enable identification of barriers and drivers of inequality and the development of proactive initiatives to diversify entry and progression in R&I careers.



**Leadership and resource** are also an important element for progressing action. At the national level the role of ministerial leadership in setting mandates for structural action in R&I can be observed in the national examples that have been presented here. Effective strategies have senior support that prioritises the agenda, promotes engagement across the organisation and creates a link with organisational, and research strategies and missions. However, in many cases change has been driven through collective action by staff and students, who have highlighted patterns of inequality and pressed for action that has been taken forward by individual organisations as well as in collective sector-wide measures. Based on the experience of gender equality actions, structural change will require engagement across the whole R&I system. This will be underpinned by supporting resources for undertaking organisational or system-wide reviews and research, the development and delivery of specific interventions, dissemination of good practice, and ongoing commitment to the long-term process of structural change. For example, Horizon Europe is providing support for the development of approaches to inclusive gender equality plans and policies (**Box 12**).

### SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVE GENDER EQUALITY PLANS AND POLICIES UNDER HORIZON EUROPE

### BOX 12

A number of inclusive gender equality projects and actions are being supported under the “Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area” (WIDERA) 2021–2022 Work Programme under Horizon Europe. Projects starting in 2022 include:

- **INSPIRE:** Centre of excellence on inclusive gender equality in Research & Innovation that will include intersectionality in its “think tank” approach to advancing and disseminating knowledge on inclusive gender equality policies in R&I
- **GENDERACTIONplus:** Support to policy coordination through a coordination network of representatives from national authorities and RFOs, to advance the implementation of the ERA gender equality and inclusiveness objectives within Member States

In terms of inclusive R&I content, a Living Lab for gender-responsive innovation will be funded under a 2022 call for proposals, which will also consider intersectional approaches when developing new solutions for gender-responsive innovation.

The new EU Award for Gender Equality Champions, also funded under the WIDERA 2021–2022 Work Programme, will award as one of its categories, a prize to organisations that have developed the most innovative inclusive GEP, addressing intersections between gender and other social categories, such as ethnicity, social origin, sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTI+) or disability.

Further support to inclusive gender equality in R&I is also foreseen under the WIDERA 2023–2024 Work Programme, in line with the ERA Policy Agenda 2022–2024 Action 5 (Promote gender equality and foster inclusiveness, taking not of the Ljubljana Declaration).

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusive gender equality plans and policies, which integrate an intersectional approach, are in the early stages of development both at European and national levels. There is a clear European-level framework for action, particularly through the new ERA Policy Agenda, and a growing range of examples at all levels. Many of the actions identified in this report are being developed in the context of measures to support the social dimension of higher education and efforts to enhance the capacity of European R&I sectors. The development of effective inclusive gender equality plans and policies can play an important role in helping to secure the social and economic contribution of R&I. As employers, educators and key spaces for the creation of new knowledge and ideas, R&I organisations can contribute to the advancement of equality and diversity goals across society.

However, while equality data in the R&I sector remains limited, there is a growing range of studies demonstrating the challenges, which the sector faces in terms of addressing discrimination and inequality for marginalised groups, including on the basis of racial and ethnic origin migrant background, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion or belief and disability. Issues noted include:

- Structural inequalities and unconscious biases that affect the progress of marginalised groups into senior research positions.
- The transition from higher education into research careers, particularly for students from minority ethnic or 'migrant' background.
- Harassment and bullying in research settings, which can particularly affect researchers from stigmatised backgrounds.
- Inflexible working practices and expectations that can disadvantage researchers from different backgrounds, including those with a disability or dependent care responsibilities.
- Non-inclusive facilities and services, including physical and digital accessibility of building and systems.

The emerging examples of action reviewed through this research represent examples of positive and broad-based commitments to equality and diversity across the sector. A key challenge for R&I organisations will be to **move actions beyond general commitments to diversity and inclusion toward tangible structural actions** to address multiple patterns of inequality. Gender equality actions provide an important starting point to address a broader set of perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, reflexive approaches to social diversity and intersectionality, as well as integrated implementation of strategies or plans that engage with the diverse experiences of marginalised staff and students, will help to ensure the sophistication and completeness of equality actions. However, the experience of gender equality, as well as actions in relation to other characteristics, suggests that structural change will also need to be mobilised around concrete action and objectives targeted at the specific and intersectional dimensions of inequality that are linked to different characteristics, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability.

On the positive side there seems to be a will on the part of certain research funders as well as RPOs to develop work in this field. **Enhancing the collection of equality data**, including establishing confidence amongst groups at risk of discrimination and bias to disclose sensitive personal information and experiences, will be an important step for R&I organisations, including at national level, and by RFOs and RPOs. Alongside developing the appropriate monitoring indicators and evaluating the impact of these interventions. Furthermore, how inclusive gender equality plans and policies are developed and implemented will be linked to the work and context of individual organisations and national sectors. However, as noted in this work there are common areas for action, and opportunities to share experiences and lessons on the path of developing inclusive policies. In this context the communities of practice approach have proved effective in sharing good practices on interventions for gender equality in R&I between organisations. Ensuring that intersectional dimensions and the experiences of marginalised groups are embedded in these arrangements will ensure that a similar approach can make a positive contribution to supporting organisations when embarking on the process of journey of designing, implementing, and evaluating inclusive gender equality plans and policies.



Fundamentally, the development and implementation of inclusive gender equality plans and policies must be done in partnership with marginalised groups. Building trust amongst these groups around the motivations for and commitment to action through inclusive gender equality actions, will only be achieved through sensitive engagement that places partnership, transparency, and accountability at the heart of the process. There are a range of interventions that can be employed as part of inclusive gender equality measures, including general diversity measures, as well as interventions targeted at specific groups, alongside interventions that address talent pipelines upstream that must be partnered with reforms in R&I organisations themselves. All of these measures can form elements of a comprehensive approach to inclusive gender equality plans and policies, and their precise design will depend on the national and organisational context in which they are being implemented and the patterns of inequality that they are seeking to address. Ultimately, inclusive practices are more likely to succeed in their aim of advancing equality where marginalised groups are partners in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a long-term structural approach to change.

## 5.1 Guiding principles

The experiences of marginalised groups, including in different national contexts, are diverse and the precise steps that different organisations will take through inclusive GEPs, as well as national policies, will differ. Nevertheless, the following common principles for European R&I may help to guide meaningful action:

- Achieving inclusive gender equality is essential for the long-term vitality of research and innovation organisations, and the success of their research, education, social, and economic missions.
- Inclusive gender equality plans and policies will only be effective if they are developed, implemented, and evaluated with the trust, support and partnership of marginalised groups.
- Inclusive gender equality plans and policies require the support and commitment at all decision-making levels, from team leaders to the top management of R&I organisations.
- Ensuring that R&I organisations are safe and inclusive places for work and study is a basic starting point for promoting equality and effective research and education organisations.
- Inclusive GEPs should promote meaningful structural change in R&I systems, practices and culture in all R&I functions and instruments, and build on the social dimension of higher education policies to diversify the R&I workforce.
- Inclusiveness and intersectionality are important frameworks for understanding and addressing discrimination but should be supported by clearly defined structural actions and objectives at policy and organisational level in relation to the needs of different groups.
- Gender equality should be mainstreamed through any actions that are focused on specific social characteristics other than gender.
- Actions should build on the lessons learnt from advancing gender equality across Europe and R&I organisations, whilst addressing the specific patterns of discrimination and inequality, experienced by other marginalised groups.
- Equality data is important to understand experiences and outcomes and guiding effective action in the short, medium, and long term, and at different levels, but the perceived absence of data should not be a barrier to action.
- Any measures to collect sensitive personal data should be developed transparently and in partnership with marginalised groups, with clear links and accountability for actions, building on GDPR principles.

## 5.2 Recommendations

### I. Support a coherent Europe-wide approach to inclusive gender equality plans and policies in partnership with stakeholders and marginalised groups.

Member States and Associated Countries should establish a working group supporting regular policy dialogue in line with ERA Policy Agenda Action 5, and in collaboration with the European Commission, funding bodies, RPO representative groups, as well as marginalised groups, to lead a shared roadmap for the advancement of gender equality and inclusiveness in the European Research Area. Dimensions to consider as part of the roadmap include:

- Coordinating and guiding activities to enhance knowledge and approaches to inclusive gender equality policies and practices in European R&I.
- Sharing principles of good practice for anti-harassment policies in R&I settings, with an emphasis on how policies and processes can support broader change in organisational culture and outcomes beyond individual cases.
- Examining how measures to diversify the R&I workforce can capitalise on efforts to support marginalised groups in higher education, including through doctoral training and early career researcher stages.
- Building on the experiences and lessons learnt from gender equality actions to support the progression and outcomes of researchers and of R&I leaders from marginalised backgrounds.
- Developing principles for incorporating criteria on intersectionality into European or national-level gender and diversity certification and award schemes in R&I. This activity should inter alia consider the outputs and recommendations from the Horizon 2020 CASPER project.

### II. Expand and enhance equality data in European R&I.

a. The European Commission should establish a working group to scope the potential for expanding R&I specific equality data in line with the ERA objectives. Building on She Figures data, the working group should include relevant European level expertise on statistical data and equality research, including FRA, Eurydice and Eurostat, national authorities and statistical authorities, and key stakeholder groups.

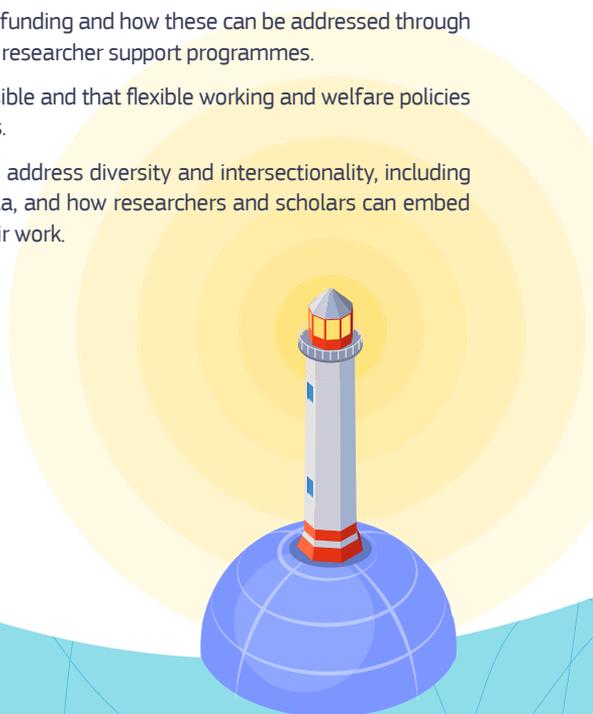
b. Member states and R&I stakeholders should undertake research into equality, diversity and intersectionality in European R&I sectors. Similar research should continue to be supported by the Commission under Horizon Europe. This work should respond to national contexts but should consider assessing in particular:

- Experiences of harassment, discrimination, and structural disadvantage in the national R&I sector, including patterns of disclosure, amongst marginalised groups.
- Transition of domestic students from ethnic minority groups or migrant backgrounds into doctoral and post-doctoral positions, including structural socio-economic factors.
- Career outcomes of R&I staff from minority ethnic and migrant backgrounds, including domestic and internationally mobile academics and researchers.

c. The European Commission should examine ways to collect voluntary and confidential data on the personal characteristics of research teams in Horizon Europe applications and projects, in consultation with key stakeholder groups. Any measures should acknowledge the sensitivity of collecting personal data and include steps to ensure confidence for disclosing information. Categories for consideration should include ethnic origin and disability. Religion/belief, sexual orientation and gender identity may also be considered, whilst acknowledging the further limitations and sensitivities on collecting this data.

## III. Raise awareness and competencies in relation to inclusive GEPs and policies

- a. The European Commission should continue supporting the development and dissemination of good practices through Horizon Europe, including supporting the development of communities of practice on working with marginalised groups to develop, implement and evaluate inclusive gender equality actions, and supporting guidance to further enhance the capacity of R&I organisations to develop and implement meaningful inclusive GEPs.
- b. National authorities, RFOs, and RPOs should be encouraged to undertake an equality audit of existing gender equality policies and plans to identify structural barriers for marginalised groups in R&I. Depending on the level (e.g., national policies, funding programmes, institutional policies and measures, respectively) areas to consider as part of reviews may include:
- Ensuring that the experiences of staff and researchers from marginalised groups are understood and appropriate channels are in place for engaging in a dialogue about the development of inclusive GEPs.
  - Reviewing available data on the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of researchers, staff and students from marginalised backgrounds and how this knowledge might be deepened through research and consultation.
  - Ensuring anti-harassment and codes of conduct address different forms of harassment, that all staff and students, including those from stigmatised backgrounds, have confidence to report their experiences, and that reports, and outcomes inform organisational change.
  - Assessing whether training for all staff, in particular senior staff and decision-makers, and students addresses intersectional inequalities and unconscious biases for other characteristics and ensuring that it embedded in broader efforts to promote diversity, equality, and inclusion.
  - Assessing whether recruitment and career evaluation methods encourage and enable the recruitment and progression of researchers and staff from different backgrounds, including at senior levels.
  - Reviewing how outreach, scholarship and professional development schemes can support students and early career researchers at risk of discrimination or exclusion to enter and progress into R&I careers.
  - Identifying inequalities in the distribution of research funding and how these can be addressed through funding policies, research assessment processes and researcher support programmes.
  - Ensuring that physical and digital facilities are accessible and that flexible working and welfare policies meet the needs of people from different backgrounds.
  - Reviewing how research and education programmes address diversity and intersectionality, including through research topics, methodologies, and curricula, and how researchers and scholars can embed these dimensions into the design and contents of their work.



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## ANNEX B ADVISORS, INTERVIEWS AND ROUND TABLE PARTICIPANTS

This report was informed by the kind input of a range of stakeholders in European R&I, including through interviews and participation at a round table. This input was crucial throughout the work but does not indicate their acceptance of findings or recommendations, and any errors are the authors alone. We would like to extend our thanks to all who engaged with this work, including:

- Gary Loke** (project advisor), Former (until 2021) Director of Knowledge, Innovation and Delivery at Advance HE (UK)
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## ANNEX C SELECTED NATIONAL EXAMPLES

	RACE AND ETHNICITY (INCLUDING 'MIGRANT BACKGROUND')	DISABILITY	MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES	SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY	DIVERSITY
AUSTRIA	<p><u>"National strategy on the social dimension of higher education – towards more inclusive access and wider participation"</u> Widening participation in higher education, including students with a migration background.</p>	<p><u>Strategy for Gender Equality and Diversity of Researchers</u> The Austria Science Fund (FWF) includes funding policies for people with disabilities, chronic illness, or difficult life circumstances.</p> <p>Universities Act and the Universities of Applied Sciences Studies Act <u>provide for the right to a different examination method</u></p> <p><u>"Promotionsstellen ohne Limit – PromoLi"</u> of the national universities association <u>Universities Austria</u>.</p>	<p><u>National strategy on the social dimension of higher education – Towards more inclusive access and wider participation</u>. This is the first full strategy document on this topic with respect to developments in the Austrian higher education sector. The document addresses the recruitment and career outcomes of those student groups that are underrepresented in the Austrian higher education institutions or that have special needs.</p>		<p>Austrian Federal Government RTI Strategy 2030: Strengthen gender equality and diversity in R&amp;D and enhance the attractiveness and promotion of research careers, particularly for women.</p> <p><u>Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2019–2024</u> includes objective 8: Social responsibility of universities: gender equality, diversity and social inclusion, responsible science, sustainability and digital transformation.</p>
FRANCE		<p>Widening participation through <u>"Doctorat Handicap"</u> contracts for individuals with disabilities The ministry also participates in the <u>Inter-ministerial committee on disability</u> (not R&amp;I specific)</p>		<p><u>National action plan for equal rights, and anti-LGBT+ discrimination 2020-2023</u></p> <p>Prevention and treatment of sexual harassment in public higher education and research establishments.</p>	<p>Widening participation actions through Strategic Committee for <u>"Social Diversity in Higher Education"</u> extended to include geography.</p>
GERMANY		<p>Widening participation in research careers through <u>Mission MINT</u> campaign and scholarships, specifically targeting women from diverse backgrounds (e.g., women with a disability).</p>	<p>Widening participation in research careers through <u>Mission MINT</u> campaign and scholarships, specifically targeting women from diverse backgrounds (e.g., women from migrant families).</p>	<p>The <u>Magnus Hirschfeld Foundation</u> funds research programmes on themes including gender identity and sexual orientation.</p>	<p><u>Magnus Hirschfeld Foundation</u> – intersectionality research programmes</p>
IRELAND	<p>Several strategic documents set out ambitions and measures towards race equality which address race and ethnicity in R&amp;I: <u>Review of race and ethnicity in higher education</u>, <u>Advance HE Race Equality Charter</u>, <u>Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector</u>, <u>National Action Plan Against Racism</u> and <u>National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017–2021</u> (Not R&amp;I specific).</p>	<p><u>National disability inclusion strategy and Comprehensive employment strategy</u> (Not R&amp;I specific).</p>	<p><u>Migrant Integration Strategy (2017–20)</u> (Not R&amp;I specific).</p>	<p><u>LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy (2019–21)</u>.</p>	<p><u>National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education</u></p> <p><u>Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science</u> strategic Goal 4: <u>Champion Equality Provide leadership, advocate equality and respect for all, support inclusive learning, working and research environments.</u></p>

	RACE AND ETHNICITY (INCLUDING 'MIGRANT BACKGROUND')	DISABILITY	MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES	SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY	DIVERSITY
NETHERLANDS	<p>Widening participation through <a href="#">Mosaic 2.0</a> (2021) and <a href="#">Excel-WISE</a> scholarships.</p> <p>The National action plan establishes NWO needs and pipeline analysis for Dutch people with a migration background.</p>	<p>NWO aims to facilitate the influx of people with an occupational disability by setting up a network to work towards providing information about possibilities for people with an occupational disability.</p>	<p>The Mosaic and Mosaic 2.0 scholarships programmes fund c.20 PhD positions annually for graduates with a migration background from non-Western countries.</p>	<p>The National action plan establishes NWO needs and pipeline analysis for LGBTI group in research and innovation.</p>	<p><a href="#">National action plan for diversity and inclusion in higher education and research.</a></p>
NORWAY	<p>The KIF Committee Strategy (2018–2021), mandated by the Ministry of Education and Research gives special attention to researchers from countries outside of Europe and North America, and descendants of immigrants from those countries. The Committee has mandated research into the experience of minority ethnic researchers in Norway, titled "<a href="#">Being a foreigner is no advantage</a>", which has informed a series of <a href="#">recommendations and actions</a> focused on organisational change in the R&amp;I sector, including <a href="#">support to integrate ethnic diversity alongside gender equality in RPOs action plans</a>. The Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) publishes <a href="#">periodic statistics</a> on ethnic diversity in academia.</p>	<p>Competence building programme, on behalf of the Ministry of Education and Research to ensure quality-assured offers for students with disabilities. Linked to Government's Action Plan for Universal Design 2015–2019 (mapping survey)</p>	<p>The KIF Committee Strategy (2018–2021), mandated by the Ministry of Education and Research gives special attention to researchers from countries outside of Europe and North America, and descendants of immigrants from those countries. Data on immigrants and descendants of immigrants among researchers and academic staff in Norwegian research and higher education is published through a cooperative project between the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) and Statistics Norway (SSB). Data is presented with an intersectional analysis of migrant origin by gender.</p>		<p><a href="#">Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF) and its KIF Committee Strategy (2018–2021).</a></p>

## Netherlands

### a nation-level strategy for diversity

In the Netherlands, diversity in research is informed by a coherent national strategy. Following the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's 2025 *Vision for Science* published in 2014, the *National action plan for greater diversity and inclusion in higher education and research* is the main document that describes the overall ambitions to achieve substantial progress in inclusive R&I nationally. The action plan was published in September 2020 and sets goals to be completed by the involved parties before 2025. These are:

- Embed diversity more effectively in existing instruments, such as in processes for assessment of project proposals, programmes and curricula, recruitment and career progression;
- Monitor diversity more widely;
- Establish or join an award system to provide frameworks and set the direction for policy;
- Bring together institutional diversity plans to facilitate their adoption;
- Establish a national centre of excellence.

The plan also sets out a series of shorter-term actions. For example, the relevant parties committed to setting targets for numbers of female professors to be reached by 2025, publishing a report on the prevention of harassment and inappropriate behaviour, and establishing an advisory committee. It also mentions a number of initiatives that are directly linked to it, such as an incentive programme for women in science and a scholarship for researchers with a non-Western background.

**Beneficiaries.** The National action plan explicitly uses a broad definition of diversity, that includes visible characteristics (e.g., gender, cultural background) and less visible characteristics (e.g., disability, psychological illness, chronic illness, sexual preference, socio-economic background, beliefs, religion, talents, working style, education, experience). The action plan stresses the importance of adopting an intersectional approach, recognising that overlapping forms of inequality must be tackled at the same time, and stating that "embedding diversity and inclusion in higher education and research calls for an intersectional and integrated approach." Actions described in the document, however, target specific groups, such as women and migrants. In the case of this policy document, 'migrant background' is used as a proxy for racial and ethnic minorities.

**Data, monitoring and evaluation.** Involved parties have not published any monitoring or evaluating data yet. However, the plan recognises the importance of such actions "so that any necessary adjustments can be made in good time." Monitoring and data collection in the Netherlands has been reported by interviewees as extremely problematic due to the political belief that no data on diversity or ethnicity should be collected. The Ministry is dedicated to improving monitoring as part of the action plan. Until progress is achieved in this area, limited data can be gathered to support the effectiveness of inclusive initiatives in R&I. The plan also states that reviews will be carried out halfway through (2022) and at the end of the five years (2025) to evaluate the progress in diversity and inclusion made. If the 2025 review indicates a shortfall in terms of results, the need for more far-reaching measures will be considered, including the option of establishing quotas at various levels and for a range of employers. It is mentioned that a cascade would be the preferred model for quotas, as this model considers the existing structure of the organisation or discipline.

**Sector engagement.** The parties included in the report are the main organisations funding and managing research and education at a national level.<sup>20</sup> The ambition is to expand this cooperation to include secondary vocational education (MBO) and higher professional education (HBO) organisations. It is then hoped that actions taken at this level will cascade to the remaining stakeholders at a national and international level. The plan states that actions need to be taken in a collective manner, as "no single organization can achieve these goals on its own: both the higher education and research field and the government aim to take collective action in this area."

20 The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), Dutch Research Council (NWO), Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), Dutch Network of Women Professors (LNWH), National Network of Diversity Officers (LandDO), Expertise Centre for Diversity Policy (ECHO), PhD Network Netherlands (PNN) and PostdocNL.

The National action plan was developed through a collaborative approach, and included consultations with stakeholders, a national conference, and a comparative study of European national policies on the matter. As part of the Plan, a committee was set up to advise both the government and the sector on inclusion and diversity, and work to achieve the five goals outlined in the document. The committee consists of a diverse set of individuals appointed in a personal capacity who combine knowledge and expertise in the field of diversity, inclusion, organizational change, leadership, and public administration with experience in the field of science, governance, and policy. The committee is supported by an independent secretary appointed at the Dutch Research Council, and is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

**Scholarships and mentoring.** Scholarships and mentoring actions are not explicitly flagged in the national action plan. However, a number of initiatives providing this kind of support have been launched as a consequence of the action plan, or even before it. For example, thanks to the [Women In Science Excel](#) (WISE) programme, whenever a university or institute selects a female researcher for a vacant position, the Dutch Research Council (NWO) may apply for a financial contribution towards the salary costs of the researcher.

Similarly, Mosaic and the new [Mosaic 2.0](#) is a PhD scholarship program aimed at graduates with a migration background from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Turkey in the Netherlands. The programme, which has a budget of approximately 2 million euros per year, covers c.20 PhD positions annually, and is running since 2002. It is believed that the programme contributes positively to increasing the number of PhD students with a migration background.<sup>21</sup>

**Harassment policies.** The National Plan does not include policies targeting harassment and misconduct. However, it mentions that among its shorter-term actions, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is to publish an advisory report on preventing and dealing with misconduct and intimidation in the field of research. The report will look at the structural and cultural factors that can facilitate misconduct within the academic world.

**Awareness raising and capacity development.** One of the five key goals of the National Action Plan is exploring the potential for a national knowledge centre of excellence aimed at promoting both awareness as well as providing capacity development for the effective implementation of the national diversity policy. Interest in this initiative stemmed from comparative research undertaken by the steering group on European best practices. This initiative follows similar actions aimed at mapping needs for researchers with a migration background and for those that identify with LGBTI groups, as well as the creation of a network to support researchers with an occupational disability. Since 1 January 2019, NWO has been a member of Workplace Pride, with Pride network meetings organised regularly.

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<sup>21</sup> Evaluations of the first edition of the programme are available [online](#) in Dutch

## Ireland

### actions to support ethnic minorities

**Approach and monitoring.** In Ireland, a series of actions are being undertaken by various actors to facilitate the inclusion of ethnic minorities in Research and Innovation in Higher Education Institutions. In the Irish case, most of the interventions are focusing on the Travellers minority.

Education and research in Ireland is informed by a national strategy that set the direction of travel for the years 2021-2023. Published by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), the strategy includes an inclusion strand<sup>22</sup> which is actioned in the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education ('National Access Plan' or NAP) launched in December 2015. The vision of the National Access Plan is to ensure that the student body entering, participating in, and completing higher education at all levels reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population. The plan identifies Irish Travellers as one of the target groups that are currently under-represented in higher education<sup>23</sup>, and sets a series of objectives and actions for all targeted groups:

1. To mainstream the delivery of equity of access in HEIs, in order to integrate the principle of equity of access more fully into the everyday life of the HEIs so that it permeates all faculties and departments, and is not marginalised as the responsibility of the designated access office;
2. To assess the impact of current initiatives to support equity of access in HEIs;
3. To gather accurate data and evidence on access and participation and to base policy on data;
4. To build coherent pathways from further education and to foster other entry routes to higher education.

Further actions on this matter are then taken by the various funding agencies active at a national level. For example, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) published a research report on Race Equality in the Higher Education Sector, for which an implementation plan is currently being developed, and the Health Research Board (HRB) is working toward a more ethnically representative standard of research for scientific trials among its community. Other agencies, such as the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), have plans to collect baseline data for protected groups. It is reported that after baseline data is collected these actors will identify areas of focus for promoting equality.

In addition to specific R&I actions, there are also a series of national-level actions plans and frameworks that address the inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups that also apply to R&I organisations. These include the National Action Plan Against Racism and National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (2017-2021) and the Migrant Integration Strategy (2017-20).

**Data, monitoring and evaluation.** A progress review of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education and the Priorities to 2021 was published in December 2018. This was based on a consultation process as well as on the review of quantitative data produced by the HEA Statistical Unit via the Equal Access Survey. The latter is an annual set of questions asked of first year undergraduate students to HEA-funded institutions. The progress review reports that, while there are some increases in academic participation especially among Irish Travellers, there are significant challenges in achieving goals in respect of this specific target group. This is partly linked to the difficulty in measuring the number of Traveller students in the higher education system, as self-identification is the only mechanism by which this information is captured, but also because the drop-out rate for Travellers is particularly high. For this reason, DFHERIS launched a dedicated initiative for Increasing Traveller Participation in Higher Education which, among the others, recommended improving engagement with Traveller representative groups to develop an interagency approach within existing structures and promote a sense of belonging and diversity in schools that will address and break down those cultural barriers that impact on Irish Travellers achieving their full potential in society.

<sup>22</sup> This is articulated across five goals: Effective policy making, Support for learners, Development of literacy numeracy and digital skills, Championing equality, and Welcoming diversity.

<sup>23</sup> Other groups include entrants from socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education, students with disabilities, first time, mature student entrants, parttime/flexible learners and further education award holders. Lone parents and ethnic minorities are included as sub-groups within the main target groups.

**Sector engagement.** The bodies included in the National Strategy published by DFHERIS, and therefore involved in ethnic diversity actions are Grangegorman Development Agency (GGDA), Higher Education Authority (HEA), Irish Research Council (IRC), Léargas, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), Skillnet Ireland, and SOLAS. All of these were engaged in the development of such strategy through a formal consultation process, which also included government departments, organisations, and private individuals.

**Scholarships and mentoring.** A number of new initiatives to support increased participation in higher education by ethnic minorities are being rolled out across the higher education sector, including scholarships and mentoring schemes. The PATH Scheme aims to increase the number of students from socially disadvantaged groups entering initial teacher education through bursaries and mentoring. Teachers with a personal understanding of the challenges that are encountered in participating in higher education are ideally placed to act as role models for prospective students from the same communities. Funding of €2.7m has been provided over a three-year period for teacher education access initiatives and mentorship, and €6m for 600 bursaries. Students who are experiencing financial difficulties whilst attending college can also access the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), which assists students with either temporary or ongoing financial difficulties who are unable to meet the costs associated with day-to-day participation in higher education, and the statutory-based student grant scheme.<sup>24</sup>

**Capacity development.** The Athena SWAN Ireland Intersectionality Working Group was established in 2019 by the National Committee for Athena SWAN in Ireland with an initial goal to develop a cross-sectoral approach to collecting data on staff and student ethnicity in the Irish higher education sector. In this context, the Athena SWAN Ireland Intersectionality Working Group has produced a statement to provide staff in HEIs with information on the rationale for collecting ethnicity data and the complexities of categorisation.

**Harassment policies.** The Irish Research Council (IRC) has published a policy on bullying, harassment and sexual harassment that aims to ensure funding is appropriately disseminated and that early-career researchers in particular are not placed in inappropriate circumstances. The document clearly describes definitions, of groups that might be subject to bullying or harassment such as ethnic minorities, and sets clear responsibilities of HEIs and RPOs in receipt of funding, including suggested response actions to disclose victims.

## Norway

### ethnicity as part of the KIF framework

**Strategy.** Norway has several national policy instruments for gender equality and diversity in research and higher education. For example, the activity and reporting duty in the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act (section 24 and 26) requires all public employers and all private employers with more than 50 employees to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to ensure gender equality. The Research Council of Norway published a series of recommendations for better gender balance in academia.

Since 2004, the Ministry of Education and Research has had a dedicated Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF), which supports and issues recommendations on measures that can help to mainstream gender equality and diversity efforts in university and university college institutions and research institutes, thereby increasing diversity among staff and in the research itself. It is informed by the KIF Committee Strategy (2018–2021) which states four main focus areas: promoting gender balance in senior-level positions, increasing ethnic diversity in research, advancing gender and diversity perspectives in research, and combatting sexual harassment. Although the strategy does not state key performance indicators, it does include a series of practical actions. These include guidance for institutions seeking support on gender and diversity activities, organisation of conferences and seminars, management training, knowledge production, advocacy work, and fostering international cooperation.

24 The statutory-based student grant scheme is the main source of support available for full-time students attending post leaving certificate, undergraduate and post-graduate courses. The scheme supported 77,000 students in the academic year 2017/18 at a cost of circa €371million. The grant ranges in value from €1,500 up to €12,185, affording particular priority to those on the lowest incomes and who are social welfare dependent.

In its work to increase ethnic diversity, the Committee states that it is currently giving special attention to researchers from countries outside of Europe and North America and descendants of immigrants from those countries, acknowledging the need for an intersectional perspective. One of the first actions under the committee mandate was to commission research into the experience of minority ethnic researchers in Norway, titled “[Being a foreigner is no advantage](#)” (Work Research Institute 2016). The paper has informed a series of [recommendations and actions](#) focused on organisational change in the R&I sector, including [support to integrate ethnic diversity alongside gender equality in RPOs action plans](#).

**Data collection.** In Norway, data on immigrants and descendants of immigrants among researchers and academic staff, including technical and administrative staff and managers with higher education, in Norwegian research and higher education is published through a cooperative project between the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU) and Statistics Norway (SSB). Data has been published in 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2018, and comes from sources such as the national [Register of Research Personnel](#) and [employment statistics](#). Data is presented with an intersectional analysis of migrant origin by gender. In addition, NIFU publishes [periodic statistics](#) on ethnic diversity in academia.

Figures from NIFU show that fully 29 percent of researchers in Norway in 2018 had immigrant backgrounds. However, 80 percent of these were internationally mobile researchers which obtained higher education abroad. Among research staff, descendants of immigrants were sparsely represented, just 0.5 percent, despite students with immigrant backgrounds making up 11 percent of the student body in 2019. Research shows that the main challenges faced by ethnic minority groups in research are recruitment, lack of inclusion, and lack of networks and systemic knowledge.

**Sector engagement.** Actions to promote ethnic diversity in research are primarily run by the KIF. The body cooperates with universities, university colleges and research institutes in Norway and internationally. Moreover, the Committee interacts with ministries, research-funding organisations, EU instruments, sister organisations such as the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Gender Perspectives and Gender Balance in Research [Kilden](#), employee and employer organisations, and its counterparts in other countries. The KIF presented a series of recommendations for measures that should be put into practice at different levels or parts of the higher education and research system in Norway for Institutions, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Research Council of Norway. These include the creation of action plans, mentoring initiatives, and measures to support women and minority groups in achieving promotion to professor level.

**Scholarships and mentoring.** The KIF Committee reports that mentoring programmes exist for persons at doctoral/postdoctoral level, at associate professor level and for postgraduate students. This includes the recommendation to create systematic career planning sessions between researcher and their closest leader and actively use meetings for career development, reflection and feedback.

**Capacity development.** One of the main activities led by the KIF is guidance, communication and support for research performing organisations such as higher education institutions. The group organises seminars, conferences, institutional visits, and maintains a website with relevant research and information, and publishes news articles on gender and ethnic diversity in academia in both Norwegian and English.

**Harassment policies.** As part of their guidance and capacity development activities, KIF maintains a list of research and action plans to combat sexual harassment, and harassment on the basis of gender, disability, ethnicity, age, political views, trade union membership, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion and beliefs.

**Recruitment.** The Ministry has consulted on a [Strategy](#) for researcher recruitment and career development for Norwegian HEIs. Similarly, KIF suggests that institutions should formulate merit criteria to attract a diverse pool of applicants, and that they should use diversity promotion, work-place inclusion, and opportunities for academic advancement to attract and retain international candidates and persons of immigrant origin in Norway. The Committee also lists some of the [best practices](#) taken in this sense at a national level on their website. These include targeted recruitment (University of Oslo), quotas (target of 10 per cent with immigrant backgrounds at the University College of South-Eastern Norway (USN) and Kristiania University College, creation of diversity committees and quality-assuring recruitment processes (Norwegian Police University College (PHS)). Under the support of KIF, Norwegian universities also implemented a series of measures to facilitate inclusion in academic environments, such as buddy systems, diversity in communications, courses in Norwegian working life and free language courses.

# Austria

## diversity for higher education students and national objectives

**Strategic approach.** The Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economics published its National strategy on the social dimension of higher education - Towards more inclusive access and wider participation in 2017. This is the first full strategy document on this topic with respect to developments in the Austrian higher education sector. The document addresses the recruitment and career outcomes of those student groups that are underrepresented in the Austrian higher education institutions or that have special needs. This includes students whose parents do not have higher education entrance qualifications or who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, specific genders in particular degree programmes, students from particular regions/federal states, students with migrant backgrounds, and students with a disability and/or chronic illness. Groups with special needs are those with young children or other care responsibilities, with a disability and/or chronic illness, with delayed entry to higher, and students in employment. The strategy, however, does recognise the intersectional nature of these diversity markers. The national strategy lays out three target dimensions: (i) more inclusive access, (ii) avoid drop-out and improve academic success, and (iii) create basic parameters and optimise the regulation of higher education policy. Each target has three action lines and practical measures for each, alongside a clear indication of which stakeholder is responsible for it.

The national strategy on the social dimension of higher education is referenced in the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2019–2024. The plan “aims to help regulate the optimisation of the Austrian higher education system and to formulate some possible courses of action for higher education in universities”. Among its eight main objectives, the document includes the social responsibility of universities, and their role in advancing gender equality, diversity and social inclusion, responsible science, sustainability, and digital transformation (Objective 8).

The National Strategy on the social dimension of higher education and the Austrian Development Plan for Public Universities target mainly higher education students. In addition to these, in the Austrian context there are then strategies and interventions that support diversity in research, published by a variety of actors. Many of these include actions to improve diversity and inclusion in the academic and research context.<sup>25</sup> In this case study we will only focus on the national objectives for diversity in higher education students, set in the two documents described above.

**Data Collection.** Both documents clearly state the various parties responsible for monitoring progress towards targets. They also report that there is going to be an evaluation of the strategy in 2021/2022.

**Sector engagement.** Both strategies include objectives that have been formulated for all responsible parties following an analysis of participation by members of all social groups in higher education. In the case of the National strategy on the social dimension of higher education, parties include federal ministries, higher education institutions, relevant interest groups and other intermediary bodies as well as civic organisations. The document reports that more than 800 experts representing over 80 organisations took part in the process.

**Capacity development and staff training.** The National strategy on the social dimension of higher education reports that the Ministry will assess information and orientation materials across all levels of education in terms of comprehensibility, completeness and accessibility with respect to the social dimension, and it will initiate and maintain peer learning activities. It also mentions that HEI institutions should provide their teaching staff with qualification and training opportunities on “appreciating and working with diversity.” The document does not specify what this may entail.

**Students’ recruitment.** The document reports clear quantitative goals to be achieved by 2025, many of which try to tackle diversity in the student’s population. For example, it aims to increase the number of “educationally disadvantaged” students in higher education, to require a minimum percentage of 10 percent of men or women in any degree programme (excluding doctoral study), and to halve the number of degree programmes where men or women comprise less than 30 percent. The strategy is not clear as of how these targets will be achieved.

25 For example, the Research, Technology and Innovation Strategy of the Austrian Federal Government 2030 aims to strengthen gender equality and diversity in R&D and enhance the attractiveness and promotion of research careers, particularly for women, or the Strategy for Gender Equality and Diversity of Researchers by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) providing funding policies for people with disabilities, chronic illness, or difficult life circumstances.

## Germany

### diversity for higher education students

The funding call "Mission MINT" (Mathematics, Informatics, Physics (Naturwissenschaft) und Technology (2021-2031)) was launched by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in order to attract women into the STEM courses, encouraging them to engage in academic careers and take on top positions in STEM companies, and thereby improve Germany's innovation capacity. Guidelines for the funding of such projects were published on the Federal Ministry's website in July 2021 and explain the purpose of the funding call, its legal framework, projects subject to the funding, target groups and the application process. The funding call is part of the wider action plan launched by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research to strengthen STEM education in Germany. It also supports the government's high-tech strategy for 2025 and its digital strategy. The initiative aims to strengthen the "creative potential, inventiveness and innovation drive" of women in STEM fields. "Mission MINT" also highlights the benefits of mentoring and networking actions to attract young women into the STEM sector. For example, projects that include role models and female identification figures are praised. The funding call also insists on using collaborative approaches (e.g., exchanging best practices, organizing workshops).

Projects that take diversity into account are particularly encouraged to apply for the funding, including both thematic diversity and target-group diversity. Indeed, the funding call welcomes projects that link STEM professions with wider societal issues such as 'sustainability, climate protection and energy' or 'mobility'. Projects targeting women with 'life situations' (e.g., women from migrant families, women with disabilities, single parents) are also encouraged to apply. Hence, the funding call is aimed at projects supporting women, and especially women from diverse backgrounds. 'Success reviews' are to be conducted regularly as laid out in the Federal Budgetary Regulations. The guidelines state that 'the grantees are obliged to make the data necessary for the success review available to the [Federal Ministry of Education and Research] or the institutions commissioned with this in a timely manner'.

Organisations covered by this initiative include universities, non-university research institutions, commercial SMEs, associations, foundations, sponsors of educational institutions and 'other legal entities under public and private law who have proven expertise in gender-specific [STEM] contexts and/or [STEM-oriented] gender research'.

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This report presents findings from the project “External expertise to support the development of inclusive gender equality in research and innovation (R&I) strategy and contribution to the European Commission Task Force for Equality”. It aims to guide European Commission work with Member States and stakeholders to support the development of inclusive gender equality plans and policies in R&I, in line with the European Union’s commitment to open its R&I gender policies to intersections between gender and other social categories, such as ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation. The report recommends that policy makers, research funders, and research performing organisations build on prior gender equality actions to develop long term coordinated action to ensure equality and inclusion of marginalised groups in R&I.

### *Studies and reports*

