

EQUAL-IST Press Release

Participation at the high-level international conference **Accelerating ERA development in STEM by promotion of gender equality in STEM research.**



The conference is held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Lithuania H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė



PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
DALIA GRYBAUSKAITĖ

On 20 of November 2017 in Vilnius at the Palace of Grand Dukes of Lithuania, EQUAL-IST participated at the synergy action of the round table discussion: 'Implementation of Gender Equality plans in research organisations: experiences and outcomes', a significant session of the conference '[Accelerating ERA development in STEM by promotion of gender equality in STEM research](#)'.

At the round table discussion participated the synergy projects GENERA, LIBRA, PLOTINA, Gender Baltics, TRIGGER, EQUAL-IST and EGERA.

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The conference was organized by Vilnius University, BASNET Forumas association, EIGE, and the Horizon 2020 project GENERA. It aimed to discuss the advancement of the European Research Area (ERA) development with focus on the ERA priority gender equality. The discussion revealed the needs for strengthening coordination of achievements within all ERA priorities.

The event included a policy debate on consolidation of the efforts of ERA stakeholders and EU scientific networks; discussions on the practical outcomes for improvement of understanding of the key factors enabling successful design and implementation of gender equality in STEM research organizations, based on established knowledge from past initiatives promoting systemic cultural change in research performing and funding organizations.

The conference brought together high-level policy makers from the European Parliament, European Commission and the Baltic Sea Region countries including Baltic States, executives of research organizations and stakeholder networks as well as representatives of the current Horizon 2020 projects.

During the round table discussion, the synergy projects have been requested to reply at three questions of common interest. The EQUAL-IST project position was the following:

***Question: Please describe briefly which particular policies you have implemented under EQUAL-IST project, how you became convinced that this policy is needed, and what are you most proud of?***



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 710549.

Reply: In EQUAL-IST project we will implement policies on gender equality for ICT-IST research institutions. In particular, we have investigated the national context on gender policies at seven countries, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Finland, Portugal, Ukraine and Lichtenstein. We have done this investigation through a participatory approach and we involved people from all levels of the RPO community, like students, professors, etc. Based on this action, we identified the challenges that will improve the current national policies and we invited the community to express feedback through the online crowdsourcing platform we developed. Following this, the RPOs designed their GEP and currently we are in the middle of the GEP implementation. After 1,5 years approximately, we will implement the action plans for gender equality in ICT-IST RPOs which actually constitute the project policies produced.

EQUAL-IST has the ambition to draw GEP, based on theoretical and empirical findings targeting disciplinary areas in ICT/IST Faculties and Departments (like HR practices and management processes, research design and delivery, student services and institutional communication), where gender segregation has proven to be high and to drive institutions toward the design and implementation of Gender Equality Plans to foster permanent institutional changes.

***Question: What will be the most important change / improvement / advancement that your organization will have made (in terms of gender equality) after [project] is formally finished?***

Reply: In EQUAL-IST, the structural changes will reflect the seven RPOs (and that will be permanent) as GEPs are part of the official policy context of each institution. We envisage to increase the number of female researchers, improve their careers and mobility, thus contribute to research intensity. For instance, we foresee for more female researchers taking part to and interviewed in recruitment processes, institutions to recruit more new female researchers compared to the previously existing average, more girls enrolling in ICT Faculties and Courses, more women researchers/teachers at RPOs progressing their careers increased compared to existing averages.

***Question: Out of your experience, which advice would you give to someone who plans or considers implementing a GEP?***

Reply: EQUAL-IST is active and running for 1,5 year, the involved RPOs have carried out all the actions needed to design a GEP, they have recently started the implementation phase, we as a consortium we have gained the experience to offer this kind of advice. So, we would recommend to start with awareness raising activities and give many of efforts on this, then to apply participatory approach and carry out the Crowdsourcing exercise to take feedback from all levels of the community and provide the option of anonymized feedback, involve more men during the internal audit and get valuable insights from synergies among projects to adapt existing methodologies for GEP design, implementation and assessment.

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