

Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

2025-2028

Vienna
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The Gender Equality Plan was prepared by the management in consultation with the Equality Officer during March 2025. It builds on the Gender Equality Plan 2023-2025, includes findings from the analysis of the last two years and informs about activities and processes for 2025-2028.

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1 Introduction

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was developed to assess the gender equality situation at the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (European Centre) and develop measures to promote gender equality within the organisation. The GEP focuses on inequalities between women and men. The European Centre is aware that other genders than women might be equally discriminated against and monitors the situation of other genders (e.g. data collection) as soon as individuals communicate living/identifying with different gender identities. The European Centre aims to be an organisation in which everyone is treated with respect regardless of gender identity and expression. We scrutinized the following five key areas:

- work-life balance and organisational culture;
- gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- integration of the gender dimension into research, policy advice and training content; and
- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

The GEP is a public document that complies with the General Data Protection Regulation. The GEP was designed following the logic of the Evaluation Framework for Promoting Gender Equality in Research and Innovation.¹

2 Baseline Information

2.1 External framework

The European Centre is legally registered as an association under Austrian law and as such is embedded in the Austrian policy context. The main national contextual factors that shape the implementation of the European Centre's GEP are:

- The structure and competitiveness of the national research and innovation systems: Austria plays an active part of the European Research Area. Austria has put in place various measures to increase the rate of women in science.
- Structure and main components of the welfare system: Austria provides a comprehensive system of social security and welfare schemes. The Austrian social

1 EFFORTI Toolbox v.2.0: <https://efforti.eu/efforti/efforti-toolbox-intro>

protection system is largely insurance based (including social, pension, health, and accident insurances) and can be traced back to the General Social Security Law (ASVG) – passed in 1955 – and parallel legislation for various occupational groups.

- Gender equality policies: The main legal basis is the Austrian Federal Equal Treatment Act (B-GBG) which provides the legal framework for equal treatment in Austria.²
- Labour market characteristics: The Austrian labour market is gender-segregated. Women predominantly work in lower-paying jobs in the service industries such as in retail or in health and social services. Women are still underrepresented in leading positions in the economy, in science and research, in politics and the public service in Austria.³
- *Gender equality index*: With 71.7 out of 100 points, Austria ranks 11th in the European Union on the Gender Equality Index. Since 2021, Austria's score has increased by 0.5 points, which is below the average EU increase.⁴
- *Gender pay gap*: The gender pay gap in Austria in 2023 was 18.3% according to Eurostat. Austria therefore has the second-highest wage gap in the EU and is well above the EU average of 12.0%.⁵
- *Women in decision-making positions*: Women are better educated than ever before, however they are still underrepresented in decision making and senior management positions.⁶ At the global scale Austria only ranks 67th out of 146 countries when it comes to the question of women's economic participation and opportunity (Global Gender Gap Report 2024⁷; see also AK 2025/Frauen Management report⁸).

The European Centre is governed by the Equal Treatment Act and various other regulations and applying all legal provisions to that end in its daily business.

2 Gesamte Rechtsvorschrift für Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, Fassung vom 30.01.2012: https://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/aut42823.pdf

3 Gender Equality in the Labour Market and Socioeconomic Equality: https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/en/agenda/women-and-equality/gender_equality_in_the_labour_market.html

4 Gender Equality Index: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2024/country/AT>

5 Statistics Austria – Press release: <https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2025/03/20250305GenderStatistik2025.pdf>

6 Federal Chancellery – Republic of Austria: https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/en/agenda/women-and-equality/gender_equality_in_the_labour_market/women-in-leadership-positions.html

7 Global Gender Gap Report 2024: <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2024/>

8 Chamber of Labour Austria - Frauen Management Report 2025: <https://www.arbeiterkammer.at/interessenvertretung/arbeitsundsoziales/frauen/Frauen.Management.Report.2025.pdf>

2.2 Organisational framework

The European Centre's main organisational context factors are:

- The European Centre is an intergovernmental organisation affiliated to the United Nations. It is registered as an association under Austrian law (non-profit/Register of Associations/ZVR No: 583470062). Its purpose is to foster the collaboration in social welfare between governments and organisations by
 - providing applied social science and comparative empirical research
 - forging the evidence-base for social policy making and mutual learning
 - initiating future-oriented public policy debates by networking.
- The European Centre's vision is to be an internationally acknowledged research organisation to forge the knowledge base for social policies in the UNECE Region.
- Research activities within the European Centre are organised into three research teams, the Employment and Labour Mobility Team, the Health and Care Team and the Social Protection and Inclusion Team. The management team comprises the Executive Director, the Deputy Director and the Head of Administration.
- Employees are classified in the occupational groups. The criteria applied include education and training, additional qualifications and skills as well as relevant (prior) work experience and project-related responsibilities. All employees are paid a monthly remuneration based on the differentiated rates specified in the salary schedule according to employment categories (as determined in the Company Agreement concluded between the European Centre and the works council of the European Centre).
- A new organisational structure was set up on 1 March 2022 to 1) strengthen cooperation across the European Centre; 2) better balance workload across the European Centre and improve planning of resource allocation; 3) guarantee proper funding mechanisms across teams; 4) ease permeable working structures; 5) create new career opportunities; and 6) make decisions more transparent. The new organisational structure of the European Centre comprises research teams, a steering group (management plus the research team leaders), the management team, task forces and the administrative department. All daily business decisions are taken by the steering group; the management team decides on top strategic and operational issues such as financial management, staffing issues and the establishment of new research teams with a participative leadership approach.

3 Objectives

The European Centre's GEP is based on the three gender equality objectives of the European Research Area, which are: 1) more women in research and innovation; 2) more women in leadership positions and 3) the integration of gender dimensions in research and innovation content.

The GEP objectives presented below are embedded in the European Centre's objectives. These are:

- To deliver high-quality social policy research, consultancy and training;
- To provide sustainable working conditions for multidisciplinary international staff; and
- To promote inter-governmental cooperation in social policies (bridge-building).

After consideration between the management and the Equality Officer, it was decided that both the overall and the specific objectives of the 2025-2028 GEP remain the same as those identified in the 2023-2025 GEP.

3.1 Overall objective

The overall objective of the GEP is to further develop a gender-responsive work culture and work organisation both within the European Centre and in the implementation of the European Centre's projects. Major activities for all genders implemented at the European Centre regarding Human Resource Development (HRD) are explained in the People and Skills Development Plan of the European Centre 2025-2029.

3.2 Specific objectives

The GEP specific objectives for 2025-2028 are to

- Improve working conditions/work-life balance for the European Centre's employees;
- Implement gender-fair organisational structures;
- Boost professional capabilities of women;
- Integrate the gender dimension in research, policy advice and training; and
- Increase the gender dimension in research outputs and impacts.

4 Lessons Learnt

In preparation for the 2025-2028 GEP, the management and the Equality Officer carried out a review of the tasks implemented (see section 6 Activities and Processes) and of the development of the European Centre in specific areas (see section 5 Data and Analysis) with the following results:

- No statements on gender-specific requirements for the institution can be derived from the comparison of the data of the 2023-2025 GEP (1 March 2023) with the 2025-2028 GEP (1 March 2025).
- Almost all activities of the 2023-2025 GEP (“Joint implementation of the GEP”, “Equality Officer”, “Career progression and recruitment”, and “Work-life balance”) have been successfully implemented. The activity “Capacity-building to increase awareness and integration of gender aspects in research and policy advice” did not take place because staff did not express any interest in a speaker/trainer for this activity when asked. The opportunity to carry out this activity will remain open during the 2025-2028 GEP. Similarly, the “Work-life balance” activity will remain an opportunity upon request during the 2025-28 GEP. All other activities will be continued as they were described for the GEP 2023-2025.
- Rather than monitoring based on the indicators set by the joint working group (management and works council), as informed in the 2023-2025 GEP, the management together with the Equality Officer assessed the data during a meeting by end March 2025. For the 2025-2028 GEP, it was agreed that the same process would be used.
- The two-year duration of the 2023-2025 GEP was considered too short. Instead, a three-year duration will be used for the 2025-2028 GEP.

5 Data and analysis

Data collection and analysis was accomplished by the team set up between the management and the equality officer. Baseline indicators (sex/gender disaggregated data collection) were scrutinized and compared with data as of 1 March 2023 (GEP 2023-2025) in the following areas: 1) Gender representation in the governance structure (management, steering group, research teams, administrative staff) as well as its age composition; 2) Part-/full-time staff; 3) Average weekly working hours; and 4) Leaves (parental and care) within the past five years; and 5) Recruitment decisions within the past five years.

No statements on gender-specific requirements for the institution can be derived from the comparison of the data of the 2023-2025 GEP (1 March 2023) with the 2025-2028 GEP (1 March 2025).

Given the overall small size of the European Centre and the low share of male employees it was not possible to scrutinize the gender pay gap. All decisions taken by the management aim at gender equality and gender inclusion.

As of 1 March 2025, the European Centre employs 20 staff/19 Full Time Equivalent/FTE (14 female/13.5 FTE and 6 male/5.5 FTE). Compared with data from 2023, the European Centre grew by 2 employees/3.6 FTE (1 additional female and 1 male employee). Today, the European Centre’s employees include 16 researchers (10 female, 6 male) and 4 staff in administration (4 female). Overall, the European Centre thus employs far more women than men.

The average age of the researchers is 40.6 years (amongst the females: 43 years and amongst the male: 41 years). Please see sex and age of the European Centre staff in total and in age groups in the following Table 1:

Table 1: Age and sex composition of European Centre staff as of 1 March 2025

Age category	Male	Female	Total
20-34	2	3	5
35-54	3	10	13
55+	1	1	2
Total			20

The management team is composed of 3 employees (2 female, 1 male). The average age of the management team is 53.7 years. The steering group is female-dominated and comprises 6 persons (5 female, 1 male). As of 1 March 2025, the research team composition is as follows (members of the management team are not counted):

- Employment and Labour Mobility: 4 employees/4 FTE (2 female FTE and 2 male FTE)
- Social Protection and Inclusion: 6 employees/5.5 FTE (3 female FTE and 2.5 male FTE)
- Health and Care: 4 employees/4 FTE (4 female FTE)

The average working hours of European Centre staff are 35.6 hours (FTE=37.5). On average female employees work 36.3 working hours while male employees work 34.1 hours (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Average working hours of male/female employees, as of 1 March 2025

	Headcount	Average working hours
Female	14	36.3
Male	6	34.1
Total	20	35.6

In total, 15% of the European Centre staff work part-time (7.1% of female staff and 33.3% of male staff). Please see Table 3 on the percentage of female and male full and part-time employees. Compared to the 2023-2025 GEP data, there was an increase in the number of full-time employees and a decrease in the number of part-time employees as recruited employees were hired on a full-time basis and existing staff members increased their working time.

Table 3: Total and percentage of female and male full and part-time employees

	Headcount	Full-time headcount	Part-time headcount	% of full-time employees	% of part-time employees
Female	14	13	1	92.9	7.1
Male	6	4	2	66.7	33.3
Total	20	17	3	85	15

The European Centre offers care leave to both sexes equally (in the past 5 years, female employees of the European Centre have requested and have been granted 0.3 care leave days per FTE, while male employees used 3.5 care leave days per FTE.

Of the 12 employees that were recruited following an open vacancy process during the past 5 years 9 are women and 3 are men.

6 Activities & Process

6.1 Joint implementation of the GEP

Like the 2023-2025 GEP, the 2025-2028 GEP is jointly implemented by the European Centre's staff within their responsibilities. Resources, especially dedicated hours of research, management and administrative staff are made available for its development, implementation and monitoring. Hence, the GEP is implemented by

providing both financial (working hours) and human resources (expertise, skills, competences) of European Centre staff. This activity serves the overall objective of further developing a gender-responsive work culture and work organisation both within the European Centre and in the implementation of the European Centre's projects.

6.2 Equality Officer

Since the 2023-2025 GEP came into force on 1 April 2023, an Equality Officer has been appointed, who serves as contact person for all staff regarding the implementation of the plan. The Equality Officer provides information to staff regarding the GEP and its implementation on request. The Equality Officer also serves as contact person for any gender-based violence including sexual harassment. The Equality Officer monitors the implementation of the GEP. The Equality Officer is jointly nominated by the management and the works council.

The Equality Officer is Selma Kadi (kadi@euro.centre.org; +43 1 319 45 05 - 24).

This activity serves the overall objective of further developing a gender-responsive work culture and work organisation within the European Centre.

6.3 Career progression and recruitment

All activities and decisions taken regarding career progression and recruitment including wage negotiations follow the key objective of gender equality. To guarantee gender equality regarding career progression, the Equality Officer is involved in the monitoring of the GEP. The Equality Officer is informed by the works council on equality matters during the recruitment processes.

6.4 Capacity-building to increase awareness and integration of gender aspects in research and policy advice

Awareness on the incorporation of gender dimensions in all the European Centre's work will be raised. The European Centre will organise workshops/trainings to increase research capacity on gender and gender inequality on demand (external expertise, on demand), monitor the HR-development measures (see also the European Centre's People and Skills Development Plan, and continue to include gender aspects in its daily research work. We aim at gender balance in leadership and

decision-making, monitor recruiting practices and are committed to the use of gender-responsive language.

These activities serve the specific objectives to improve working conditions and work-life balance for all European Centre staff; help implementing gender-fair organisational structures; boost professional capabilities of women; integrate the gender dimension in research and teaching; and increase research outputs and impacts.

The target is to hold a minimum of one workshop/training during the GEP period. Although the Equality Officer did not receive any suggestions from staff for trainers/topics during the 2023-2025 GEP, this activity is again part of the 2025-2028 GEP and workshops/trainings will be organised upon request.

6.5 Work-life balance

The Company Agreement concluded between the European Centre and the works council of the European Centre establishes that employees are given the possibility to determine their daily working hours autonomously. To adapt to personal needs, they may start and end their working time within the conditions defined in the company agreement. Irrespective of their gender, employees have access to educational leave, parental leave and care leave. Mobile working arrangements are offered to all staff as defined in the Company Agreement. This enables flexibility. We aim at keeping the flexible working models in place and intensify the efforts to consider the individual needs and situations, including opportunities for teleworking.

This activity serves the overall objective of further developing a gender-responsive work culture and work organisation within the European Centre and especially the specific objective to improve working conditions/work-life balance for the European Centre's employees. To reflect the work-life balance situation at the European Centre with all staff, the Equality Officer organised a brainstorming session to identify potential improvements in 2024. The results were discussed and reflected by the management and the Equality Officer. Suggested improvements related to general improvements of work-life balance, rather than specific actions to reduce gender inequalities regarding work-life balance. The European Centre aims to further improve work-life balance regarding gender inequalities if opportunities arise and a similar workshop can be organised upon request during the period 2025-2028.

7 Assessment and reporting

Rather than monitoring based on the indicators set by a joint working group (management and works council), as informed in the 2023-2025 GEP, the management together with the Equality Officer assessed the data and the activities identified in the 2023-2025 GEP during a meeting in end March 2025.

As with the 2025-2028 GEP, management and the Equality Officer will evaluate the data and activities at the end of the period to prepare for the follow-up 2028+ GEP.

This GEP includes reporting based on indicators and activities implemented in the previous 2023-2025 GEP. Management together with the Equality Officer will report on the 2025-2028 activities in the forthcoming 2028+ GEP.

8 Coming into force and validity period

The Gender Equality Plan comes into force by 1 April 2025 and is valid for a duration of three years until 1 April 2028.

Vienna, 1 April 2025