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GENDER EQUALITY IN ENGINEERING THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND COMMITMENT (GEECCO)

WORK PACKAGE 4:

IMPLEMENTING GENDER EQUALITY PLANS: FOCUSING ON DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND BODIES

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1 Introduction

This document aims at summarizing the processes and procedures implemented in each RPO (TUW, UPC, UNIRC, PK) with a view to addressing gender equality issue in decision making processes and bodies. Further information are also given regarding the framework and context (laws, structure of decisional bodies at each RPO, existence of structure dealing with equality and staff wellbeing issues and so on) on which the actions undertaken by each RPO lie.

Moreover, when possible, a long term perspective is also considered, so that potential resistance and counteracting favourable promising conditions can be weighted, analysed and properly taken into account.

2 Addressing the gender equality within decision-making processes

According to the project proposal, the Work Package 4 (WP4) focuses on decision making processes within the RPOs which are relevant for the establishment of a GEP and its implementation.

Therefore, since the beginning of the project, all the processes and body structures were in depth analysed so that specific and tailor made actions and measures were able to be designed and implemented. From this perspective the progressive exchange of information and discussion among the various RPOs allowed both the critical issues and the best courses of action to be singled out, even though specific approaches, suited to each context, were maintained.

Moreover, during the project life, training/workshop/seminars were organized and delivered with a view to raising awareness and enhancing knowledge about the matter among members of decisional bodies. These demonstrated to be a valid device in order to support the various undertaken actions, especially in those contexts where the issue was actually considered and addressed for the first time.

The various specific approaches are reported in the following sections, detailing the contribution of the RPO partners.

2.1 TUW

When it comes to decision-making processes at TUW, we face two main issues:

- Decision-making processes still produce biased results, gender bias appears with all genders.
- Knowledge about gender-related topics and the services of the Office for Gender Competence has not yet reached the whole organization.

In order to foster gender equality in decision-making, TUW discussed the topic with the Vice Rector Human Resources and Gender and included the following two actions in the GEP:

Planned Action/activity: Trainings for appointment committees on gender bias and social competence	
Action Description	From mid-2021 on, all appointment committees must take part in a standardized information and training session which includes a training on gender bias.
objectives	Awareness raising of all members of boards

Planned Action/activity: Trainings for appointment committees on gender bias and social competence	
Timing	Starting 2021
Actors involved	Deans, Heads of Institutes, HR Department, Office for Gender Competence
Targets/indicators	Concept written; Concept approved by the Rectorate; Trainings held (app. 10/year)

Planned Action/activity: Evaluate the learnings of a project on digitalization in order to build knowledge on gender and the services of the Office for Gender Competence	
Action Description	In 2021, the learnings of a project on digitalization will be evaluated in the light of how they can be integrated into regular processes.
objectives	Knowledge building about gender and the services of the Office for Gender Competence throughout the University
Timing	In mid 2021 learnings will be evaluated
Actors involved	Vice Rector Human Resources and Gender, Digital Office, Office for Gender Competence
Targets/indicators	Study on shaping digitalization in a participatory way: gender-appropriate and diverse finished; knowledge about gender appropriate digitization in digital office exists

2.1.1 Background information:

Austria has a 50% quota for decision-making bodies at universities, which is regarded a successful strategy and useful legal framework (Universities Act 2002, § 20a Gender-Equal Composition of Collegial Bodies: Collegial bodies (i. e. rectorate, senate, university council, license to teach committees, appointment committees, curriculum committees, faculty councils) shall consist of at least 50% women).

Against this background, TUW did research on this topic and conducted interviews with female researchers that are active in various committees. Results show that while quotas enable more women to take part in decision-making processes, they are not enough to undo gender inequality within academia:

- Representation of women does not automatically equal gender awareness in decision making, i.e. 50% women in decision making bodies will not automatically imply that more women are appointed as professors, because gender biased decisions are taken by all genders (i.e. also by women). Decision making bodies thus still have to be trained in gender awareness, since it is all members of a committee and not only the women there who are responsible for gender sensitive and fair decisions.
- Also, while the quota has been an important step towards gender equality, at TUW the quota is not met in all decision-making bodies. One reason is that the share of women professors is only 14,3% (2019). This is another reason why it's important to implement mandatory trainings on gender bias.

2.1.2 Possible Challenges/obstacles

Possible challenges that could occur:

Trainings:

- Trainings may be not enough to minimize gender bias in appointment procedures (maybe: resistance from members of the appointment committees; one-time-action not enough; old-boy network stronger than effects of a training; knowledge gained in trainings not taken up/spread to other decision-making processes)
- Mandatory trainings could become to voluntary trainings / not enough time for a training on gender bias / information sheet instead of a training

Evaluation of learnings:

- Not enough resources for a proper evaluation of the project and for properly spreading the word about the services of the Office for Gender Competence

2.1.3 Factors counteracting challenges and obstacles

We can prepare ourselves and meet these challenges as follows:

Trainings:

- Evaluate the impact of the trainings and adapt it, if necessary
- Discuss trainings/impact with the Rectorate
- Regular communication about the importance of gender equality and the need for minimizing gender biased decisions
- Discuss sanctions or benefits for faculties which hire too little / enough women

Evaluation of learnings:

- Discuss/argue for necessary resources for a proper evaluation
- Cooperation with PR department for spreading the word
- Set up a communication plan

2.2 UPC

2.2.1 Possible Challenges/obstacles and Factors counteracting challenges and obstacles

One of the main objectives is to comply with the law in Spain, which states that the relevant decision-making bodies have to be gender balance. In Spain universities are not guaranteeing that they comply with this regulation; this, together with the lack of women in the STEM field, made the situation even worse for UPC, so big efforts were required to correct it.

There are many decision-making bodies whose members (or part of them) are elected, so a system should be implemented to ensure that the group of elected members is gender balanced. UPC analysed different systems (mainly, zipper systems, duo systems and the Ghent University system, which are briefly explained in the deliverable D 8.4 "Tailor made GEP 3.0"). Since all universities face the same problem, UPC is leading a interuniversity working group to work towards gender balance in decision making (at a Catalan level).

To make a clear regulation be implemented, the Statutes of UPC need to be changed. In fact, the Statutes should have been revised a couple of years ago, but the university decided to wait, arguing that a new University Law has to be approved and, hence, Statutes will have to be adapted to it. This is the first obstacle for ensuring gender balance in decision-making bodies (in those that come from election), but it should be a temporary obstacle. Of course,

the second obstacle that university will have to face is the approval of a regulation that makes more women being included in decision-making bodies, in exchange of men, so this has to be explained very well to the UPC community (UPC has done many awareness raising campaigns so no strong resistances should appear here).

On the other hand, there are some decision-making bodies whose members are appointed (by the Rector); these bodies are not gender balanced, but thanks to awareness raising and women empowerment, more women are being appointed.

Finally, there is a group of people in leadership positions that are also there because they have gained an election (for example, directors of schools, faculties, departments and research institutes). The obstacle to have more women in these leading positions is that many women did not consider themselves as possible candidates, but this is also changing thanks to women empowerment (for example, the percentage of women directing schools/faculties has increased from 23.54% in 2017 to 35.29% in 2021; instead, in the direction of departments and research institutes there has not been a relevant increase, going from a 16.22% in 2017 to a 16.66% in 2021).

The other big objective is to include gender dimension in decision-making; that is, that gender is considered as a variable when making decisions, and that gender impact is assessed. To achieve this objective two things are required: first, people in leadership positions and decision-making bodies has to be gender sensitive and assume gender as a mainstreaming issue to be included in every activity (this is achieved by means of raising awareness activities and by making these people participate in gender equality activities, like working groups or committees); and second, the university has to build capacity and give resources for people in leadership positions and decision-making bodies so they are able to include gender dimension in the decision making processes (this his achieved by means of trainings, tools and guidelines). The main obstacle here are those men in middle level management positions, which do not show much interest in these questions and they just do not read the information they receive and not attend the trainings that are designed for them. They do not do an active resistance but their passive resistance is also very bad for achieving the objectives. To reduce the effects of the resistances (either active or, more often, passive) of some people (mainly men), the university needs to include gender dimension in all activities and at the centre of its strategy and keep launching raising awareness campaigns, so the organizational culture changes towards gender equality. The creation in 2019 of a new vice-rectorate on Gender Equality is a step towards this change.

At UPC actions within the decision-making processes are included in the strategic lines “Strengthening the institutional leadership”, “Inclusion of the gender perspective in the management of human resources and teams”, and “Communication for cultural change” (some of these strategic lines include actions that are not decision-making related and, thus, are not included here). The following tables include all the actions.

ACRONYMS:

- GIC Innovation and Community Bureau
- GPAQ Quality Planning and Evaluation Office
- ICE Education Science Institute
- SLT Language and Terminology Service
- VRGE Office of the vice-rector in charge of Gender Equality

Planned Action/activity: Working groups	
Action Description	To create working groups to ensure mainstreaming and effectiveness of objectives and actions at the UPC.
Objectives	To raise awareness among UPC members on equal opportunities
Timing	01/16 – 01/20
Actors involved	VRGE, Equality Unit
Targets/indicators	Number of working groups created

Planned Action/activity: Gender balance in decision-making bodies	
Action Description	Analyse decision-making at the university. Analyse systems for ensuring gender balance in decision bodies.
Objectives	To balance the presence of women and men in decision-making bodies and levels.
Timing	05/17-12/22
Actors involved	VRGE, Equality Unit, GEECCO
Targets/indicators	Changes in regulations. Composition of decision making bodies and number of decision making bodies with gender balance.

Planned Action/activity: Trainings, tools and guidelines for decision-making	
Action Description	To facilitate the inclusion of gender dimension in decision making (trainings and tools and guidelines).
Objectives	To build capacity and give resources for including gender dimension in decision-making
Timing	01/19-12/21
Actors involved	VRGE, Equality Unit, GEECCO
Targets/indicators	Number of trainings and people attending the trainings. Guidelines created and/or disseminated for including gender in decision making.

Planned Action/activity: Non-sexist language at all levels	
Action Description	To use non-sexist language and gender sensitive communication at all levels of the UPC to enhance the image and communication of the institution. To facilitate the use of non-sexist language.
Objectives	Raising awareness, enhancing image

Planned Action/activity: Non-sexist language at all levels	
Timing	01/16-12/21 (continuous task)
Actors involved	VRGE, SLT
Targets/indicators	Valuation index of the UPC community on the neutrality of the image. Trainings on non-sexist language.

Planned Action/activity: Awareness raising and capacity building for managers	
Action Description	To provide tools, training and awareness-raising activities for management staff and people in positions of responsibility.
Objectives	To ensure that the people in positions of responsibility incorporate the gender perspective in their area of activity.
Timing	01/18 – 12/21
Actors involved	GEECCO, GIC, ICE
Targets/indicators	Trainings done each year. Dissemination of available tools. Awareness-raising activities (surveys, Gender Equality workshops and days, social media, etc.).

Planned Action/activity: Engagement of managers in Gender Equality	
Action Description	To encourage the participation of management staff and people in positions of responsibility in some of the activities and projects related to Gender Equality.
Objectives	To ensure that the people in positions of responsibility incorporate the gender perspective in their area of activity.
Timing	01/17 – 02/20
Actors involved	VRGE, GIC
Targets/indicators	People in positions of responsibility (departments/schools/faculties directors; vice rectors; rector...) involved in Gender Equality commissions, groups or units.

Planned Action/activity: Communication for cultural change	
Action Description	To plan institutional communication actions on equality annually. To increase the use of social networks.
Objectives	To raise awareness among UPC members on equal opportunities. To include cross-cutting values of integration and social responsibility in the UPC's communication.
Timing	01/17 – 12/21

Planned Action/activity: Communication for cultural change	
Actors involved	GIC, Communication Service, Network of Equality Officers, GEECCO, Equality Unit
Targets/indicators	Number of actions. Social network activity.

Planned Action/activity: Communication for cultural change	
Action Description	To disseminate external social awareness initiatives among the community.
Objectives	To raise awareness among UPC members on equal opportunities. To include cross-cutting values of integration and social responsibility in the UPC's communication.
Timing	01/17 – 12/21
Actors involved	GIC, Communication Service, Network of Equality Officers, Equality Unit
Targets/indicators	Number of initiatives

2.3 UNIRC

The issue of gender perspective and equality within decision making bodies is the object of the line of Intervention A of the GEP of the Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria.

It is worth noting that GEECCO project allowed the issue to be addressed for the first time at UNIRC and a lot of effort was devoted to actions aimed at raising awareness and knowledge. Trainings, but also informal/formal meeting and communication strategies were exploited during this first phase to reach the objective and to make the problem recognized and known. Figures and analysis also included in the gender budgeting document, which was issued and delivered on an annual basis, were used to fulfil the task.

After this first phase, the adopted strategy was aimed at implementing and strengthening the structures/bodies which are to be dedicated to the gender equality issues, currently and for the years to come (e.g. Coordination among equal opportunity delegates, administrative office for organizational support, Guarantee Committee for equal opportunities, etc.). As a matter of fact, the assessment of the actions/measures adopted by the University governance from the perspective of the gender equality is among the missions of these structures/bodies.

Finally, GEECCO team tried to strengthen the commitment of the University Governance by introducing objectives of gender equality within the long term planning of University policy and strategy. This makes, for the first time, the gender equality perspective a very important aspect of the planned development of the University.

It is worthy of note that positive results of the implemented actions became visible lately: evaluation criteria which considers the impact on the different genders of the approved measures and policies have been introduced in various occasions. As an example, it can be cited the approval of the smart working organization plan which envisages a monitoring analysis, which is to be performed every year, in order to assess the extent of the implementation and the satisfaction level of the staff. The crucial fact is that the envisaged analysis will have to take the gender, family composition and various intersectional parameters into account, and data need be gathered accordingly. This perspective is

completely new for the Mediterranean University and it is the result of the work performed by the GEECCO team during these years.

In addition, also the staff directly selected by the Rector during the last few years is characterized by a female share higher than in the past, especially in comparison to the situation in 2017, when the project started. Particularly in the last year important mandates were assigned to women as “International Cooperation and European Funds research project”, “Right to education, “Career counselling and tutoring”, “Data analysis”

In this context, the following tables try to summarize the main action designed and partially undertaken in order to realize the implementation of the GEP for the part which focuses on the decision making processes and bodies, with a view to detailing the motivations and the analysis outcomes which led to the definition of every specific measure, the strategy used or planned for the achievement of the results and the person/groups involved. An overview of the future activities is also provided. Some actions were also updated after the GEP approval and this is also reported in the following tables.

Planned Action/activity: <u>Inclusion of the GEP within University’s long term planning (e.g.: positive action plan)</u>	
Action Description	<p>The policy and the development pattern of the University is designed by means of two plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategic Plan which sets up the development policy of the University • The integrated plan which fixes the specific objective of the planned University development and singles out the offices responsible for every objective/action <p>On the other hand, typically, the gender equality issue is addressed in the positive action plan, which is a sort of implementation plan for specific actions which regards also the staff wellbeing.</p> <p>Therefore, originally, the GEECCO team strategy was to include the approved GEP within the positive action plan only, because the themes it deals with are in line with the ones treated in the GEP.</p> <p>At the time when the GEP was elaborated, this seemed the best course of action in order to constrain resistances and to start the introduction of the GEP perspective in the decision making processes of the University.</p> <p>In this context, in fact, it is worth highlighting that this is the first GEP approved at UNIRC and the first time that actions addressing the related issues are undertaken.</p> <p>However, during the presentation of the GEP to the decisional bodies of the university, also thanks to the network and collaboration activated among the various structures dealing with the gender equality matter at UNIRC (Guarantee Committee, gender equality delegates,</p>

Planned Action/activity: <u>Inclusion of the GEP within University's long term planning (e.g.: positive action plan)</u>	
	<p>etc.), we experienced a positive change of attitude towards the issue.</p> <p>For that reason, we tried to push the goal a little forward, asking for the inclusion of the GEP within all the various programmatic tools of the University.</p> <p>This strategy demonstrated to be effective, because all the plans (Strategic Plan, integrated plan, positive action plan) today include the GEP and its envisaged actions as objectives or specific lines of interventions.</p> <p>This means that, from now on, the objectives/tasks/actions related to gender equality issues are considered as part of the development strategy of the university and, hence gender equality perspective is thereby involved in the decision-making processes. As a matter of fact, all the plans envisage the monitoring of all the involved objectives and tasks and of the extent to which they are accomplished, with a view to verifying whether changes of strategy are needed.</p> <p>The reasons why our approach succeeded are to be found in the network/coordination among structures addressing the equal opportunity issues at UNIRC, in the support we often received by the middle-level management (e.g. Department directors), but also in the leverages which were used to foster the change of perspective: comparison with practices undertaken by other well organised, well performing, known and efficient universities; the advantages (in term of funding, growth and attractiveness to potential students) which could derive by supporting the scientific/academic accomplishment and the plain development of the academic staff which has been experiencing difficulties in their career development, etc.</p>
objectives	Long term sustainability of the GEP
Timing	<p>Planned From January 2021 to December 2023</p> <p>The positive Action Plan, the Strategic Plan and the Integrated Plan were approved by decisional bodies at the end of January and they all included the GEP and its implementation within the envisaged action</p>
Actors involved	CUG, equal opportunity delegate, other structured staff of the University
Targets/indicators	Monitoring Report/approved plans

Planned Action/activity: <u>Identification of Specificities Preventing the Equal Representation of Genders within Decision Levels</u>	
Action Description	Identification of criticalities of gender representativeness at the different decision-making levels, with respect to the

Planned Action/activity: <u>Identification of Specificities Preventing the Equal Representation of Genders within Decision Levels</u>	
	<p>composition of the academic community, on the basis of the data and statistics produced annually.</p> <p>Proposals of schemes/systems addressing the issue.</p> <p>The reasons which make the action needed lie on the fact that the issue of unequal representation of genders within decisional bodies was long-neglected at UNIRC.</p> <p>Therefore, since the beginning of the project, we tried to make it clear by disseminating statistics and analysis regarding the current situation.</p> <p>The gender imbalance in the decision making bodies and the possible causes of the current situation have been thereby underlined and made evident.</p> <p>In order words, figures, data and analysis identifying criticalities in the process leading to the appointment of decisional bodies allowed the problem to be recognized from a technical/scientific point of view, so that proposals for action were allowed to be discussed.</p> <p>Therefore, we decided to make this analysis a structured action, so that criticalities can be singled out in a continuous way, allowing the assessment of possible pattern of changes (improvements, setbacks or drawbacks)</p> <p>In addition, the outcome of these analysis are planned to be used to foster and rationalize the proposals of schemes/systems addressing the issue (e.g. double preference scheme).</p> <p>The network of equal opportunity delegates and the Guarantee Committee for equal opportunity and personnel wellbeing (CUG) is responsible for this analysis and proposals</p>
objectives	<p>The purpose of this action is to identify, explain and propose to decision-making bodies suitable criteria/modality, for the appointment/election of members who, according to the Statute, are chosen/elected „<i>in compliance with the constitutional principle of equal opportunity</i>”, including the possibility of the implementation of the “double preference scheme” envisaged as a principle by the Article 19 of the University Statute</p>
Timing	<p>September 2021 – December 2021 for analysis and preliminary discussions</p> <p>January 2022 – onward for the official discussions with decision-making bodies and formal request</p>
Actors involved	<p>Guarantee Committee for equal opportunity and personnel wellbeing (CUG), equal opportunity delegates, University’s decisional bodies</p>

Planned Action/activity: <u>Identification of Specificities Preventing the Equal Representation of Genders within Decision Levels</u>	
Targets/indicators	Reports/proposals

Planned Action/activity: <u>Strengthening Coordination Services on Equal Opportunities</u>	
Action Description	<p>The measure is designed to strengthen both the force and the impact of the involved offices, which are thereby called to act in a coordinated way. As a matter of fact, resistance to change was the real difficulty we faced since the beginning of the project and we found in alliance/relationship and networking the effective leverage to overcome the problems and succeed to a certain extent.</p> <p>It is intended to establish a coordination group which should manage and harmonize the planned equal opportunities actions/measures and the work of the University structures/offices dealing with the matter (e.g.: CUG). It will work to facilitate the integration of the gender perspective into the University Government, to remove the causes that in fact hinder a homogeneous representativeness of the members of the academic community at different levels.</p> <p>(Actually, the coordination has been already established - https://www.agraria.unirc.it/ateneo/pari_opportunita_coordinamento.php)</p> <p>It is planned that it will be supported by a specific office which is going to be appointed.</p>
objectives	Implementation of a coordination group/committee – Strengthening its structure and impact also by means of a dedicated office
Timing	January2021 – onward
Actors involved	Equal opportunity delegates, Guarantee Committee for equal opportunity and personnel wellbeing (CUG), ,
Targets/indicators	Annual meetings

Planned Action/activity: <u>to support the Equal Visibility of Genders</u>	
Action Description	<p>Our analysis demonstrated that one of the causes preventing a balanced gender presence within decision-making bodies is the lack of women available to run for election.</p> <p>This occurrence happens for a set of reasons, among which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The small number of women in the highest levels of the academic career, available to be appointed to the leading roles • An environment, where the competence/expertise/achievements of women

Planned Action/activity: <u>to support the Equal Visibility of Genders</u>	
	<p>are poorly visible and sometime unrecognized, which leads women to underrate their chance of success.</p> <p>The action, in this case, aims at addressing the last issue, by giving visibility to the initiatives and results of the less represented components of academic staff by means of Communication activities involving the whole University, the single Departments and exploiting the various available communication devices (Web/social channels, press releases, etc.).</p>
objectives	This action can help to create a more productive and stimulating working environment for all academic and administrative staff, while at the same time encouraging the participation of all members of the University community, also contributing to enhancing the number of women available to run for elective roles
Timing	January 2021 onward
Actors involved	Communication Delegates, University Communication office, Equal opportunity delegates
Targets/indicators	Number of communications

Planned Action/activity: <u>Reconciliation between work and private life (flexibility of work conditions)</u>	
Action Description	<p>The analysis performed during the last years demonstrated that the presence of women in the highest level of the career ladder is remarkably low.</p> <p>This fact, inevitably, reverberates in the numbers of women available to be appointed to leading roles.</p> <p>Therefore, forms of sustain to the careers of women are needed also in order to enhance the female share in decision-making bodies.</p> <p>The action aims at addressing this aspect of the issue for the part which is influenced by the work organization.</p> <p>As a matter of fact, it regards the Introduction of systems and schemes aimed at reaching an optimal balance among work and life, assisted by methods suited to assess the effectiveness of the adopted measures.</p> <p>In this direction GEECCO team acted in the last year, also exploiting the experience regarding the new work organization that the pandemic crisis has produced.</p> <p>Collaboration was, hence, activated among GEECCO team, CUG, and the administrative Secretary of the University</p>

Planned Action/activity: <u>Reconciliation between work and private life (flexibility of work conditions)</u>	
	<p>and, as a result, the “<i>smart working plan</i>” has been issued and already approved at the end of January.</p> <p>The plan also envisages a monitoring analysis, which is to be performed every year, in order to assess the extent of the implementation and the satisfaction level of the staff. The envisaged analysis will have to take the gender, family composition and various intersectional parameters into account, and data will be gathered accordingly.</p> <p>Currently, a coordination group committed to the application of the plan has been appointed and the CUG, in the meeting of the 15th of February 2021 nominated two delegated to be member of the group.</p>
objectives	<p>Implementation of a smart-working systems and workplace wellbeing.</p> <p>The action aims at sustaining career (improving the balance between work and life) and consequently enhancing the numbers of women available to be appointed with decision making roles.</p>
Timing	It was envisaged from January 2022 by the GEP, but actually it started from January 2021 onward
Actors involved	Administrative director, CUG, human resource area
Targets/indicators	Reports/proposals

Planned Action/activity: <u>Coordination Committee for equal opportunity projects and plans</u>	
Action Description	<p>This is an action that GEECCO team has designed especially in view of the future possible participation of the Mediterranean University in the designing of plans and projects addressing the gender equality issue at UNIRC.</p> <p>As a matter of fact, for the last few years the matter has been receiving growing attention from the academic community for a set of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actual possibility that the access to funding is linked to the gender equality level reached within the research performing organization • The introduction of the human science area of research within the Law and Economics Department (which now is the Department of Law, Economics and Human Science); this area of research might be very interested in these genre of projects. <p>In order to make the action in this direction more effective we thought that a body, coordinating all the initiatives which are bound to be undertaken, supporting</p>

Planned Action/activity: <u>Coordination Committee for equal opportunity projects and plans</u>	
	<p>collaboration/network among interested subjects (also external to the University) is strongly needed.</p> <p>As a matter of fact, the existence of several subjects (Departments, Committees, Bodies, Associations and Working Groups in Projects) that work in the field of gender equality, in the absence of coordination, can cause unnecessary overlaps with loss of resources and effectiveness of the actions themselves.</p> <p>All these subjects are able to design projects to access to funding concerning this theme, but, currently, in a non-coordinated way.</p> <p>In order to strengthen the overall action of the Mediterranean, an “internal network” will be developed coordinated by a designated office that will act as a link between all those involved in various ways</p>
objectives	Implementation of a coordination office for designing projects an plans on equal opportunity
Timing	June 2021 onward
Actors involved	Representative of the Delegates/Parties Delegate Committee and representatives of the various Committees, Evaluation board, Bodies, Associations and Working Groups in Projects
Targets/indicators	Annual meetings

Planned Action/activity: <u>Gender Budgets (long term monitoring of gender equality)</u>	
Action Description	<p>This is an action which was planned with the aim of :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drawing the undivided attention of the decision-making bodies to the matter, for the years to come; 2. Continuously raising the academic community awareness on the issue and on the evolution of the state of things; 3. Monitoring the evolution of the situation with time, so that the effectiveness of the undertaken measures can be assessed. <p>As a matter of fact, we would like to ensure that the level of awareness (of the decisional bodies) reached as a consequence of the actions of these years can endure and improve in the next future.</p> <p>In our experience the clear portrait of the current situation, by means of analysis, figures and data, exploiting the scientific point of view, was an effective way to draw</p>

Planned Action/activity: <u>Gender Budgets (long term monitoring of gender equality)</u>	
	<p>attention, to raise awareness and make the issue non-negligible anymore.</p> <p>Moreover, the presence of a system of aggregated indicators for gender equality makes it possible to monitor and assess the level and the effects of the implementation of the GEP and of gender policies over time.</p> <p>To these aims, in accordance with the national guidelines, data disaggregated by gender, age and role, will be gathered and analysed. The collected data will cover the female and male presence in the different roles/level of staff and the student population. The results of the analysis, presented also through the use of tables and graphs, will be part of a report (Gender Budgeting) prepared by the CUG and which will be published periodically (annually) on the institutional website of the Mediterranea and submitted to the decision-making bodies of the university.</p> <p>Through this report the decision-making bodies will be informed of the actual situation in terms of gender equality and will be able to observe the effectiveness and long-term effects of the choices over the years.</p> <p>In accordance with the new national guidelines (issued at the end of 2019, after the GEP submission to decisional bodies) on the elaboration of the University gender budgeting, the document should also contain possible action lines to address identified crucial issues and information regarding the budget to be assigned.</p> <p>Therefore, the document, which has to undergo to the Academic Senate and Administration Council assessment, is meant to become part of the University decisional processes (as more recently stated by the national guidelines on the issuing of Gender budgeting document).</p>
objectives	Delivering/updating of the University gender budgeting
Timing	June 2021 onward
Actors involved	University Governance, CUG, vice Rector for Equal Opportunities, University Statistical Office
Targets/indicators	Annual report

Planned Action/activity: <u>Strengthening the Office for “Administrative and Organizational Support to Equal Opportunities”</u>	
Action Description	On the 15 th of June 2020, as a consequence of the request of the GEECCO team and equal opportunity delegate, the Administrative Directorate of the Mediterranea University activated an office for “Administrative and organizational

Planned Action/activity: <u>Strengthening the Office for “Administrative and Organizational Support to Equal Opportunities”</u>	
	<p>support to activities for Equal Opportunities” under the coordination of the pro-tempore vice Rector for equal opportunities.</p> <p>The necessity of such an office, in fact, rose during the GEECCO team activity in collaboration with the equal opportunity delegates when official documents had to be registered, revised, organised and sent. In addition, also an office controlling the administrative consistency of the issued documents and procedures was clearly needed.</p> <p>Currently, the office is composed of on single personnel unit, but it was envisaged this specific action aimed at its improvement.</p> <p>Therefore, the action (already discussed among CUG members an decisional bodies) aims at the implementation of a sort of recognition of the activity carried out by the appointed personnel (within the evaluating procedures which the staff undergoes periodically) and at the enhancement of the personnel units appointed</p>
objectives	Improving the Office for “Administrative and Organizational Support for Equal Opportunities” performance
Timing	January 2021 onward
Actors involved	Administrative Director or its Delegate, vice Rector for Equal Opportunities of the University
Targets/indicators	Annual report on the activity

Planned Action/activity: <u>Dissemination of best practices aiming at gender balanced decision making bodies</u>	
Action Description	<p>Notwithstanding the various bodies/offices which were either implemented during the GEECCO project or envisaged/improved by the GEP, in order to set up an organized structure operating to reach the gender equality goals (which UNIRC was devoid of), challenges might come from a progressive reduction of interest and commitment of the decision-makers and academic community</p> <p>This action tries to counteract this tendency by continuously disseminating knowledge on the measures and optimal situations outside the University.</p> <p>In order to raise awareness and to sustain the commitment of the decision-making bodies of the “Mediterranea” towards the objective of gender balanced leading positions, periodic reports will be submitted to the decision-making bodies to convey information about best practices on equal opportunities successfully adopted by well performing Italian Universities.</p>

Planned Action/activity: <u>Dissemination of best practices aiming at gender balanced decision making bodies</u>	
	Dissemination of best practices will be used also to demonstrate the advantages deriving from the improvement of the equality level, hereby trying to overcome the resistances of men in joining the gender equality efforts.
objectives	Raising awareness by disseminating best practices
Timing	December 2021 onward
Actors involved	Governance bodies, Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities, CUG
Targets/indicators	Number of best practices

2.3.1 Possible Challenges/obstacles

All the designed actions aim at the goal of gender balanced decisional bodies, but in our opinion neither of them is likely to receive active opposition, also because they seem to support a sort of “obvious” process, given that it has been understood that the path towards gender equality is bound to become one of the requisites which research organizations are called to comply with.

On the other hand, passive resistances are a real possibility, especially on account of the top-level management, but we are very confident that the structures which were put in place can effectively deal with this type of obstacles also due to the force that the national law has been giving to some of them.

As an example, the CUG has to assess the sustainability and rightness (in terms of staff wellness and equality) of most of the decisions and policies undertaken by the University, therefore it could play a pivotal role in guiding the resolutions on the designed path.

In our opinion, the main possible direct and active resistances are going to regard the proposal for the implementation of strict rules or systems designed to actually and actively enhance the number of women within decisional bodies in a longer term (GEECCO team designed the proposal and equal opportunity delegate and CUG should support the discussion on the matter for the next months).

As a matter of fact, it implies a change of the Statute by means of a procedure which is quite elaborated and this issue will be certainly raised to sustain the thesis that the action is not worth the time and effort it costs.

Specifically, from the analysis of the statute and current situation it emerged that the crucial issue concerning the matter is represented by the elective roles which are predominant (for both number and importance).

The actions designed (within the GEP) to address the issue, in this case, aims at enhancing the availability of female candidates running for election by creating a more encouraging and proactive environment (actions aimed at enhancing women visibility within academic community, implementing a more organized structure dealing with gender equality issues, supporting the development of female researcher career in order to increase the number of grade A female professors able to easily propose themselves as members of decisional bodies).

However, GEECCO team has also started the discussion (also involving equal opportunity delegates and CUG) with a view to designing the scheme that might be adopted to overcome the problem of the unbalanced representation of genders within decisional bodies. The scheme which currently seems the most suitable (also because it overcomes resistances and all the critics regarding possible

constitutional legitimacy,) was adopted in various Italian contexts (e.g regional elections), consists in the introduction of the double gender preference. Specifically, the scheme allows voters to express two candidates as long as they are of different sexes. If this rule is not respected, the second preference is cancelled.

In addition, in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the scheme, it should be required that also the electoral lists are gender balanced. From this perspective, the proposal of the GEECCO team is that the lists are formed so that the most represented gender does not exceed the share of 60%.

Nevertheless, the adoption of the proposed system implies a review of the Statute (also making the system mandatory) and of the codes ruling elections, which is not planned so far. Therefore, the GEECCO team proposal (to be sustained by the Equal Opportunity structures actually in place at UNIRC) aims at fostering a discussion in this direction, also exploiting the fact that the matter should be going to be discussed at national level within the committee for gender issues of the rector national conference.

Notwithstanding this circumstance, resistances to statute changes are to be expected.

Furthermore, possible resistances could also rise in relation to the identification of resources to be destined to various actions.

2.3.2 Factors counteracting challenges and obstacles

We can prepare ourselves and meet these challenges as follows.

As regards the resistance to the implementation of a system designed to enhance the number of women within decisional bodies, the awareness raising actions are going to be continued, disseminating the current situation at our University and the best practices implemented by the other well performing university. To reach the aim all the events/occurrences are going to be exploited: formal and informal meetings, workshops, conferences, but also periodical reports, specifically designed communication campaign and so on. The aim is also the search of support among the mid-management level (e.g.: Department Directors who demonstrated to be more positively inclined towards the issue and who are very interested in the research funding possibilities which can be going to be related to the equality level reached within the University).

However, the plan is to exploit the network with the Italian Universities (UNIRC is part of the Committee for Equal Opportunity matters of the national Conference of Rectors) to attain a common proposal for an effective change in this regard.

With respect to the identification of the resources possibly needed to realize some of the actions, it will be carried out during the elaboration of the gender budgeting which is a document already received as part of the decisional processes (as the national guidelines now state). Therefore the identification of resources is something which cannot be denied as a principle. The discussion could regard the amount and typology of resources.

From this perspective, the plan consists in counteracting the possible resistance by strengthening the structures/bodies/offices which are in charge of the matter (equal opportunity delegates, CUG, coordination offices), enhancing their bargaining power, also exploiting the recent law evolution which make them an important part of the decisional processes (e.g.: CUG is responsible of judging and assessing the fairness and effectiveness of measure regarding staff wellbeing and work conditions).

In addition, the awareness raising campaigns, performed during these years (by means of trainings, communication campaign involving meetings and web/social channels) will continue to counteract resistances with knowledge and consciousness.

2.4 [PK](#)

During the GEECCO project (2017 – 2021) the first Gender Equality Plan “GEP for PK” was elaborated, prepared and presented to the university community for review. This proposed in 2020 by GEECCO team document „GEP for PK“ is still being consulted in 2021 by the special “Rector’s Commission for GEP implementation” for final approval. The first part of this GEP is dedicated to the planned institutional changes, related to **decision-making processes**, in order to fulfil the specific goal:

Enhancing balanced gender representation in management bodies, i.e. chairing faculty, university management, expert and review teams and chairing scientific and outreach events. The overall **objective** of this aims to create a representation of women and men in all structures representing the PK community that reflects the actual gender structure of the workforce.

Several activities were undertaken by the PK GEECCO team regarding structural changes in decision-making processes and bodies, and the long-term actions and activities are described in the tables below (which summarize the GEP envisaged actions and the supporting activities already carried out).

Planned Action/activity: Inclusion of the Equality Strategy within University’s long term planning	
Action Description	<p>Inclusion of „GEP for PK“ as a document regulating GE work at the university.</p> <p>During the GEECCO works (04.2017 – 04.2021) multiple actions were undertaken by GEECCO team to create the positive approach among PK community toward gender equity issues and GEP implementation. Communication with decision makers (direct meetings, presentations of EU rules as well as national and university regulations, workshops with decision makers, publications of GEP goals to gain the commitment of rectorate, participation in the process of election of PK Senate and PK Board including representation of women), communication with internal and external experts to build a strong group of supporters (dissemination of GEECCO actions among academics and students during seminars, conferences and formal university meetings, organising PK women’s network WIEmy, cooperating with another H2020 projects dedicated to support GEPs, organizing workshops and participating in GE related conferences at Pedagogic University, Jagiellonian University and both national and international engineering organizations and meetings, WIE WFEO, building the GEP for PK draft document and organizing consulting actions with external and internal experts, cooperation with the PK Center for Technology Transfer CTT responsible for HR logo, collecting letters of commitment for GEP from candidates to the rector position during the election process, cooperation with the Social Sciences Collegium KNS and PK vice-rectors, etc.) created a process of institutional changes leading to sustainable Equality Strategy implementation.</p>
Objectives	<p>Introducing long-term support for women in decision-making positions, in recruitment and retention and in research and teaching. Developing GE in employment and work standards at PK.</p>

Planned Action/activity: <u>Inclusion of the Equality Strategy within University's long term planning</u>	
Timing	Planned from March 2021 to December 2024.
Actors involved	PK GEECCO CORE Team, Rectorate, PK GEP Committee and responsible experts.
Targets/indicators	Monitoring Reports.

Planned Action/activity: <u>Creating positions for experts that support Gender Equality</u>	
Action Description	Appointment of competent experts who are holding independent positions at PK university with responsibilities to support GEP implementation. Those experts should serve all PK community (students, academics and administration staff) with professional help, advice and problems solving in equity issues and/or conflicts and with whom anyone can contact in case of discrimination or harassment. The new posts are opened at PK: PK Mediator / Academic Ombudsman (Appointed for the first time in March 2020) and Rector's Plenipotentiary for Prevention of Discrimination Practices (from 2020).
Objectives	Implementing long-term support to PK academic community, also to Rectorate and another Decision-makers in implementation of sustainable structural changes at PK through realization tasks and aims of GEP
Timing	2020 – 2024 Appointment of PK Mediator as permanent position: from March 2020, than she resigned in July 2020 for personal reasons; after that the procedure for appointing another mediator last till December 2020, and from December 2020 now new mediator is appointed and working
Actors involved	PK GEECCO CORE Team, Rectorate, CTT (HR) and PK administration
Targets/indicators	Appointed and operating bodies (Mediator and Rector's Plenipotentiary for Prevention of Discrimination Practices at PK)

Planned Action/activity: <u>Communication with DM bodies and cooperation in spreading the idea of equality at PK</u>	
Action Description	Conducting diverse activities with and for academic community of PK, which cover preparation for meetings, analysis of documentation and organising meetings programs with decision-makers such as rectors, deans, heads of institutes, reporting.
objectives	Increasing the academic awareness and engagement of decision making bodies in communication of importance of GEP at PK, equality and women's rights. Every year, about 30 meetings were held with the rectors' authorities, deans and managers. The main topics of the communication and

Planned Action/activity: <u>Communication with DM bodies and cooperation in spreading the idea of equality at PK</u>	
	<p>cooperation actions and talks were the introduction of GEP, the situation of women in technical universities. First of all, we disseminate the knowledge, expertise and best examples from leading universities among decision-makers to increase their interest in structural changes; furthermore, we present to DM and all Academia members the added values of mixed women/men cooperation in engineering, but also as a strong argument we present the GEP requirement as a precondition to get EU funding for research in the next programme Horizon Europe 2021-2027. Making commitment with students and researchers interested and supporting gender actions is another way to build good cooperation and relations with newly elected Rector in 2020, high level management and women role-models are also the way we have to act.</p> <p>In addition, it is expected that positive outcomes will come from a number of cooperation and projects that are ongoing on equal opportunities topics.</p>
Timing	(2017-2021) Spreading the idea of equal rights by GEECCO team members, continued within GE actions after the end of the project (2021-2024 and on).
Actors involved	PK GEECCO CORE Team. After GEECCO (from May 2021) responsible experts at PK
Targets/indicators	Growing social awareness and openness to equality.

Planned Action/activity: <u>Cooperation with external institutions and experts promoting equality</u>	
Action Description	<p>Establishing long-term contacts and communication base with external institutions supporting the equality initiatives in STEM and at universities, namely with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Jagiellonian University, where the H2020 GENERA project was running and now the H2020 ACT project is progressed. • Project GEinCEE project (Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe), being engaged in many actions like seminars, workshops, investigations of the GEP road-maps. GEECCO Team PK is also involved in CoP (Communities of Practice) activities. • Project MoU of CoP - On the Way to Gender Equality Community of Practice for Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe, so PK is a member institution within the Communities of PrACTice (ACT CoPs). • Project H2020 ACT project where we are taking part in the GEAM action (Gender Equality Audit and Monitoring), involving PK as a partner into a large Act-on-Gender survey (works at PK on the GEAM survey started in July 2019, and ended in

Planned Action/activity: <u>Cooperation with external institutions and experts promoting equality</u>	
	<p>June 2020). Results have been elaborated and distributed in October 2020,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plenipotentiary for Equal Rights of the University of Warsaw, cooperation on assistance in the preparation of GEP for PK. • Gender experts from Gdansk University (prof. M. Zadkowska team) and from e Pedagogical University in Krakow. University of Warszawa, UW, is another our valuable cooperating partner from Poland, with whom we consult the strategy on building strong group to establish Gender Observatory at PK.
Objectives	Increasing capacity of GE at PK through cooperation with experts and groups dedicated to gender issues, women success and sustainable engineering, increasing awareness among decision makers toward equality.
Timing	Long term multidisciplinary cooperation, started within GEECCO project 2017-2021, planned continuation and development of cooperation within next project's partners is planned.
Actors involved	PK GEECCO Core Team members involved in the Communities of Practice CoP, H2020 ACT group Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe GEinCEE (till Oct.2021), after Oct.2021 PK experts designated to equality issues.
Targets/indicators	Number of meetings in a year (2 per partner) / engaged people

Planned Action/activity: INCREASING THE GENDER BALANCED REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT BODIES – teams of experts	
Action Description	Development and supervision for the adoption of rules on equal rights at PK: formulating guidelines on sustainable gender representation in events organized at PK (separately for the Scientific and Organizational Committees of conferences), in teams, expert and review committees, at faculty and university committees, at management staff level, disseminating these guidelines at all units level.
Objectives	To create a representation of women and men in all structures representing the PK community that reflects the actual gender structure of the workforce. Determining the number of people (F/M) in scientific decision-making bodies at the office in the next terms of elections at PK. The project of GEP for PK document, as prepared by the GEECCO Core Team, includes quota 20% in 2022 and quota 40% in 2024. The further work is necessary to adapt this proposed quota to the PK rules.

Planned Action/activity: INCREASING THE GENDER BALANCED REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT BODIES – teams of experts	
Timing	Implementation of the guidelines by 2022
Actors involved	PK GEECCO CORE Team (till the end of GEECCO project), Rector, Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality at PK.
Targets/indicators	Target group: PK community, with a particular focus on women and men working in research and teaching, PhD students / Annual PK Rector's reports on the number of F/M in all PK scientific events and related DM bodies.

Planned Action/activity: INCREASING THE GENDER BALANCED REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT BODIES – research committees	
Action Description	Adoption of rules on equal rights at PK, which specifies the percentage of women in research: Formulating and implementing guidelines on the percentage representation of women and men in expert, review, examination and scientific teams and committees. Proposed EU standards for determining quota from 2022 to 2024 (30% and 40%).
Objectives	Determining the number of researchers (F/M) in decision-making bodies at the office in the next terms of elections at PK. The project of GEP for PK document, as prepared by the GEECCO Core Team, includes quota 20% in 2022 and quota 40% in 2024. The further work is necessary to adapt this proposed quota to the PK rules and existing terms of electing scientific teams and committees.
Timing	December 2024
Actors involved	PK GEECCO CORE Team (till the end of GEECCO project), Rector, Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality at PK in cooperation with the Scientific Councils of Disciplines.
Targets/indicators	Annual PK Rector's reports on the number of F/M in all DM bodies.

Planned Action/activity: INCREASING THE GENDER BALANCED REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT BODIES – Decision Making positions	
Action Description	Development and adoption of rules on equal rights at PK, which specifies the percentage of women in decision-making bodies: formulating and implementing guidelines for the entrustment of chair in decision-making bodies to both women and men, as vice-chancellors, councils of appointments, deans, deputy deans, heads of departments.
Objectives	<u>Providing rules for the number/percentage of women in decision-making bodies at the office before the next terms of elections at PK.</u> The project of GEP for PK document, as prepared by the GEECCO Core Team, includes quota 20% in 2022 and quota

Planned Action/activity: INCREASING THE GENDER BALANCED REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT BODIES – <u>Decision Making positions</u>	
	40% in 2024. The further work is necessary to adapt this proposed quota to the PK Statute and existing terms of electing decision-making bodies.
Timing	December 2024
Actors involved	Rector, PK Administrative Units and the Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality at PK
Targets/indicators	40% of women by 2024 / Annual PK Rector's reports on the number of F/M in DM bodies.

Planned Action/activity: INCREASING THE GENDER BALANCED REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT BODIES – <u>rules for representation at events</u>	
Action Description	<p>Collecting data on the percentage of women and men in organizing committees, event scientific groups and as speakers in agendas.</p> <p>On this basis, preparing recommendations on gender equality in the organization of such events and the ways in which sustainable gender representation can be implemented.</p> <p>Creating co-financing form for events organized at PK with a column for the gender ratio of the invited female/male panelists, organizers, people cooperating with the organization. This information will be one of the evaluation criteria.</p>
Objectives	<p>Increasing the number of underrepresented gender (F/M) in PK representing bodies at events and structures.</p> <p>The project of GEP for PK document, as prepared by the GEECCO Core Team, includes quota 20% in 2022 and quota 40% in 2024. The further work is necessary to adapt this proposed quota to the PK Statute and existing rules.</p>
Timing	March 2021 – December 2024
Actors involved	PK GEECCO CORE Team (till the end of GEECCO project), Rector, PK Rector's Committee on Equality, The organizational units of PK, in cooperation with the Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality at PK.
Targets/indicators	To rich representation of women and men in all structures representing the PK community that reflects the actual gender structure of the workers at PK / Annual PK Rector's reports on the number of F/M in representing and managing bodies.

Planned Action/activity: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUALITY ISSUES AND STRENGTHENING THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY – <u>Equality Observatory</u>	
Action Description	<p>Establishing Equality Observatory at PK (see description in WP8.4). Observatory tasks will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● collecting disaggregated data on gender equality at PK, employees and students,

Planned Action/activity: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUALITY ISSUES AND STRENGTHENING THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY – Equality Observatory	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● collecting research results on equality and diversity among PK community, ● regular monitoring of the state of equality at PK and the state of knowledge on equality solutions, ● publishing research results and analyses on the website, ● publishing statistics in the national and EU context.
Objectives	Increased awareness measured by the results of periodically conducted surveys on knowledge growth, changes in attitudes and beliefs.
Timing	From 2021 – till December 2024
Actors involved	PK GEECCO CORE Team (till the end of GEECCO project), Rector, Rector's Plenipotentiary for Equality at PK, Equality Observatory at PK
Targets/indicators	Regular reports at dedicated website on the number of F/M in all DM bodies.

2.4.1 Possible Challenges/obstacles

In order to understand well the problems faced by the Polish GEECCO Core Team in fostering institutional changes at PK, also faced by another groups of women, the history of the project successive development, as well as the social and political situation in Poland should be mentioned.

At the beginning of the project, there was no understanding or support in relation to the project. The former PK rector did not understand the aim of structural changes and perceived no need for any gender equality measures adoption. The former vice-rector for scientific affairs (by 2020 election) also did not see and did not support GEECCO's initiatives. At PK, there is a rather stereotypical belief that true engineering is a male job, while women are not treated seriously. At the same time, the problems faced by women - students, scientists, employees of PK – were treated as not noticed.

The new PK rector (in power from September 2020) supports the GEECCO team and gave full consent to such initiatives like gender equality at university. First of all, he expressed understanding to the purposefulness and noticed the problem of equality in Poland.

One should also pay attention to the stormy discussion in Poland on women's rights, which started on October 2020. In recent months, after the judgment of the constitutional tribunal, which banned abortion in Poland (only for eugenics reasons), there are spreading large national protests called "women's strike". The protests were attended by men and women, young and old. Demonstrations of many thousands of people took place in many Polish cities. Currently, the ruling anti-democratic party in Poland, supports the judgment of the tribunal. Despite this, most of rectors from Polish universities supported the women's strike. The rector's and dean's authorities at the PK also supported this strike and protested students, which made academic community to be proud of our DM. In late January 2021, the verdict against the women's freedom of choice was published, resulting in increased demonstrations across the country.

It should be noted that the socio-political situation in Poland now, coupled with the old stereotypes regarding engineering among some older decision makers at university, both create difficult conditions for structural changes at PK, with slower results than at universities in Western Europe. By taking small

steps, we are trying to achieve the equal rights standards as required at the EU. However, this is a long-term process to gain sustainable changes and immediate results are not possible.

2.4.2 Factors counteracting challenges and obstacles

It is important to note also the positive aspects in our work, related to gender issues in Poland and at PK. One of this has already been mentioned, namely the women's strike. The strike began with a district on women's rights and equality. Currently, there is a public debate in which not only women take part, but a large number of men. This national movement proved that the perception of women's rights is now disseminated well in the whole country and the topic of gender equality is sound. Although the restrictions related to Covid'19 do not let people to gather and continue protests at Polish streets in 2021, the women's rights and gender equality are still the loud spread issues to be continued both at political and public discussions. This must finally bring positive changes in Poland, and universities are expected to be the first organizations implementing changes in this revolutionary process.

Another factor that would speed up our institutional changes is that PK is not alone in Poland among universities working on GEPs. The first GEP in Poland has been introduced at the end of August 2020 at the University of Warsaw. It will certainly be an argument and a sign for other universities (including technical ones) that such a document and approach to equal rights is important.