

# Gender Equality in Academia and Research

## Bulgaria

### PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN RESEARCH

#### Legal framework

Until October 2015, no national laws have been put in place promoting gender equality in research in Bulgaria.

#### Policy framework

Until October 2015, no national policies have been put in place initiated by public bodies that promote gender equality in research in Bulgaria.

#### Other stimulatory initiatives

The Women in Science - L'Oreal Foundation and UNESCO gives scholarships for women in science in Bulgaria since 2010. The scholarships are awarded to young women, giving them access to the international research community, empowering them and giving them the chance to continue their research and boost their careers.

#### Key actors

Considering the current lack of laws and policies promoting gender equality in research, no public actors actively intervening in this area could be identified at this point.

The Bulgarian Centre of Women in Technology (BCWT) is a part of the European Centre for Women in Technology. The Centre participates in the realisation of regional innovation projects and stimulates the cooperation in research, the exchange of good practices and the creation of new resources in technologies.

### INITIATIVES FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS

Gender equality plans promoted by universities and research organisations have not been set up until October 2015.

At the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, one reference to gender equality could be identified in the rules for personnel selection. It is mentioned that the selection is done in respect of the principle for equality between candidates.

Within the framework of three EU-funded projects, several initiatives promoting gender equality in research have been implemented. A selection of these actions is briefly described below.

As a part of the consortium of the project ADVANCE (2006-2008), the South-West University implemented an eight-month mentoring programme, participated in a one-month summer school programme for women researchers in Austria, and assisted in drafting a manual resulting from the project as a whole. This University is currently part of the consortium of the structural change project FESTA (2012-2017). So far, they have carried out interviews, workshops, informal discussions and have created manuals aimed at raising awareness about gender equality at the University. Within the framework of this project, a Centre for Gender Equality has been created at the Faculty of Philosophy, with the goal to extend gender equality efforts beyond the project.

The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences took part in the project eument-net (2007-2008). The project consisted of a prescribed set of steps to prepare a training methodology (mentoring programmes) and a manual for promoting gender equality in research performing organisations (part of the project results).

## **RELEVANT EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES**

### **Acquiring knowhow on mentoring programmes for women scientists and assessing the attitudes of women scientists towards such programmes at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS)**

This approach was developed within the framework of the eument-net project (2007-2008). The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was part of the consortium of this project. The approach consisted of a prescribed set of steps to prepare a training methodology for mentoring programmes and a manual for promoting gender equality in research performing organisations. Its goal was to lay the basis for future mentoring programmes, to showcase women's scientific achievements at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in an online database and to train relevant stakeholders on gender equality in research.

### **Raising individual and organisational awareness about gender equality in research performing organisations**

This initiative is being promoted by the South-West University (SWU) within the framework of the EU-funded project FESTA (2012-2017). It consists of interviews, workshops, informal discussions and manuals. SWU used interviews as an additional channel to raise awareness in interviewees by engaging in deeper discussions about gender equality. Also in line with this approach, the project deliverables have been presented at the university in workshops not in the form of one-way presentations, but as open discussions in order to further boost the awareness-raising efforts.