

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Czechia

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN RESEARCH

Legal framework

Until October 2015, no specific legislation was created in the Czech Republic dedicated to promoting gender equality in research and innovation.

Policy framework

In 2013, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports adopted the [State of Gender Equality and Proposal for Mid-Term Strategic Plan in Gender Equality within the Remit of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports](#), which contains mid-term objectives for promoting gender equality in research, including: creating a policy platform to implement gender equality in research, implementing a system of gender mainstreaming of strategic documents and policies, modernising research performing organisations through cultural and institutional change, and supporting the development of specialised knowledge in the field of gender and science. The document also contains indicators of fulfilment.

In 2014, the government adopted the [Governmental Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic for the Years 2014-2020](#), which contains a particular section dedicated to equalising the position of women and men in science, research and innovation (section 5).

In 2015, the [Technology Agency of the Czech Republic](#), public funding organisation for applied research, was the first public body in the country to adopt a gender equality policy. This policy addresses both the internal functioning of the agency (working conditions, gender balance in evaluation panels) as well as external roles (gender dimension in research, impact on society).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the management body for Operational Programme Science, Research, Education for 2014-2020, which contains Specific Objective 5 Human resources development. One of the actions listed under this objectives aims at promoting “balanced professional development of researchers in line with the cultural and institutional change approach for advancing gender equality”. This will make it possible for research performing organisations to apply for funding for strategic development and the implementation of gender equality plans.

Other stimulatory initiatives

Two awards for women researchers exist in the country:

- The [L’Oreal UNESCO and the Czech Academy of Sciences award](#) for early career women researchers.
- The [Ministry of Education Milada Paulova Award](#) for women’s lifelong achievement in science, with a monetary award of CZK 150,000 (approx. 5,555 Euro).

Key actors

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is responsible for science, research and innovation policy.

The Office of the Government, Section for Science, Research and Innovation is in charge of science, research and innovation policy.

The Council for Research, Development and Innovation is an advisory body to the government, with executive functions. It is responsible for defining the R&D budget.

The Technology Agency of the Czech Republic is an organisational unit of the State, a public funding organisation for applied research, with a budget chapter.

INITIATIVES FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS

Two gender equality plans were set up in the country. These are implemented as part of EU-funded structural change projects: TRIGGER at University of Chemistry and Technology (UCT), and EGERA at Centre for Climate Change Research – CzechGlobe. Consequently, the areas of action are in line with ERA and H2020 priorities of gender balance in research careers, gender balance in decision-making and gender dimension in research.

Actions in both these gender equality plans address three levels: cultural, institutional and individual. On the cultural level, actions aim at giving visibility to women scientists' achievements through interviews and posters (UCT) and integrating gender equality in strategic documents and visions (UCT, CzechGlobe). On the institutional level, actions focus on addressing work-life balance (flexible work arrangements), evaluation practices (e.g. academic age versus biological age), and research staff's contracts (collective agreement provisions). On the individual level, actions aim at raising awareness (gender equality trainings, gender bias trainings for various target groups), encouraging gender sensitive leadership (for top management), providing career support through a mentoring programme for early career researchers, soft skills training for early career women researchers (communication, negotiation, leadership, personal development, time management), and integrating a gender dimension in research (trainings for all groups of researchers with a particular focus on early career researcher in doctoral and postdoctoral stages).

Existing experience attests that formalisation of institutional rules is fairly complicated. Issue of gender balance in decision-making is often identified with quotas and as such rejected. Quantitative monitoring and evaluation indicators are not yet in place while soft monitoring occurs regularly as part of project implementation.

RELEVANT EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

Initial institutional analysis

In line with recommendations for the implementation of structural change and to establish a baseline assessment of situation, the University of Chemistry and Technology (UCT) performed an initial comprehensive institutional analysis. The research design and instrument were developed and the analyses performed by an external gender expert partner, the National Contact Centre for Gender and Science at the Institute of Sociology. The analysis included: 1) statistical data collection and analysis, 2) questionnaire survey of working conditions of both academic and administrative staff, work-life balance, mobility, research and teaching evaluation, 3) individual and group interviews, 4) documentary analysis, 5) media analysis, and 6) analysis of legislative framework in the Czech Republic from a gender perspective. The statistical analysis focused on the representation of women among students, academic and scientific/research staff, working conditions of men and women, the representation of women at various stages of the academic hierarchy, representation of women in leadership and decision-making bodies, the gender pay gap, and the Internal Grant (the success rates of female and male students in the grant competition, the representation of men and women in decision-making bodies of the IGA, and also among project evaluators).

These analyses served to identify bottlenecks and issues to be tackled through the UCT's Gender Equality Plan, and will be periodically repeated, to guide institutional development at UCT. Following the statistical data collection, the internal monitoring system was amended to include the variable "sex" to facilitate monitoring in the future. Internal reflection on the process was performed in order to overcome resistances and concerns the survey elicited and to ensure wider uptake of the results.