

Gender Equality in Academia and Research

Luxembourg

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN RESEARCH

Legal framework

The government is playing an important role in ensuring gender balance in research organisations in Luxembourg. The Laws relating to the creation of the Fund for National Research (FNR) (Law of 31 May 1999 and amended by the Law of 27 August 2014) and the organisation of Public Research Centres (Law of 29 December 2014) contain a provision promoting a gender balanced representation of members of the Board (at least 40 % of the underrepresented sex). This gender balance rule is also valid for Scientific Advisory Boards which are the advisory body of the Board of Directors on scientific matters. The law creating the University of Luxembourg dates from 2003 and states in article 25 that a delegate for Women's questions is to be created to assist the rectorate in promoting women's career at the University. At that time, the issue of women's participation in decision-making was not yet in the legal agenda. In the foreseen amendment of the law for the University, it can be expected that targets for decision-making will be considered.

Policy framework

The Government is using its financing power as a lever for improving gender equality in research organisations through Performance Contracts. The Ministry of Research and Higher Education interacts with the management board of the Research Institutions but does not interfere on their internal structures (such as executive position or recruitment). This Ministry is in charge of establishing the rules concerning the organisation of research organisations and signing a multi-annual Performance Contract with each one of them. They have imposed the rule to ensure gender balance in research organisations' boards (with the exception of the University of Luxembourg governed by another law dating from 2003 with no provisions regarding gender balance).

The Ministry of Equality in Luxembourg (MEGA) included in their action plans for 2006-2009 and 2009-2014 the integration of gender in research as a transversal issue within the University of Luxembourg. However, this was not implemented by the University. The current action plan of the MEGA emphasises a gender mainstreaming approach in the areas of Education and Research. The relevant Ministry is responsible for ensuring the integration of a gender perspective in these areas.

Other stimulatory initiatives

Until October 2015, Luxembourg has not set up other stimulatory initiatives gender equality in research.

Key actors

The Ministry of Higher Education and Research is in charge of establishing the rules concerning the organisation of research organisations and signing a multi-annual Performance Contract with each one of them (which include a rule to ensure gender balance in research organisations' boards).

INITIATIVES FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS

Although no gender equality plans have been set up in Luxembourgish research organisations until October 2015, the University of Luxembourg recently prepared a Gender Action Plan which is embedded in a national Gender Strategy for Research & Innovation (2015-2021). This Plan focuses on enabling the conditions to promote a gender balanced institution. Examples of actions include awareness-raising seminars with decision-makers, measures increase the percentage of women in the academic staff, mentoring at all levels (BA, MA, PhD and Post-doc), gender seminars for all students, integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching, networking at national and international level, and gender-sensitive data collection.

The Internal Regulation of the University of Luxembourg (Règlement d'ordre intérieur), adopted in 2004 and renewed on a yearly basis, established the creation of gender delegates for each faculty. Although a Gender Mainstreaming Committee was set up as early as 2009, it was only officially formalised in 2014 in the Internal Regulation of the University. It is composed of gender delegates from all faculties (gender delegates), a representative from the Human Resources Department and from the Personal Delegation, as well as a students' representative. This Committee is chaired by the Gender Delegate of the University ("delegate for Women's questions") and its mandate is to promote gender equality in all faculties and in the HR department (promotion, harassment and power relations), as well as in research and teaching.

The University of Luxembourg had a four-year plan for 2010-2013, in which a target of 23 % female academics was fixed. The target was reached and even exceeded. The percentage of women in the academic staff increased from 18 % in 2004 to 27 % in 2014. Diverse initiatives to support maternity and conciliation of research and family life have also been adopted.

A campaign “Stop Harassment” was also launched to recall that University condemns harassment and understands it as an unacceptable behaviour. This campaign was also aimed at informing about the existing support personnel.

In order to change the current male-dominated board of the university, the issue of gender balance in decision-making bodies of the University of Luxembourg is expected to be integrated in the future amended Law of the University.

The Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (LIST), the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER), and the Luxembourg Institute for Health (LIH) are implementing the legal provisions relating to gender balance in administration boards (a target of 40 % for the underrepresented sex).

The Luxembourg Institute for Health (LIH) has adopted rules relating to the applications of candidates in order to ensure a gender-balanced composition of the Collaborative Council (Scientific advisory board): “the LIH promotes equal gender representation in the Collaborative Council. To this end, the Chief Executive Officer or his/her representative will make sure that, on the day of closing the nominations, among the applications received, each sex is represented by at least 40 % in both categories of employees. Should this not be the case, the Chief Executive Officer, or his/her delegate, will notify the staff through bill posting on the same day and will accept additional applications from the underrepresented sex until a rate of 40 % is achieved, respectively, over a maximum period of three working days.” As a result, the Collaborative Council is gender-balanced.

RELEVANT EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES

Convention to improve the reconciliation between family life and research activities

Annex 2 of the Internal Rules of the University of Luxembourg contains a Convention to improve the reconciliation between family life and research activities. This convention was signed in 2005 and remains valid until today. It provides that after the legal maternity leave (2-3 months), a full-time working parent may reduce his/her teaching activity to 20 %. This rule is applicable for full-time teachers and researchers until the children commence pre-school. Reserved day-care places are also available to personnel members and students, as well as breastfeeding rooms at the University (in each building). The issue of prohibiting access to laboratories by pregnant women has also been at the agenda. It led to a change of the security rules and a system of support (office and technical assistant) is being implemented since October 2015.