



Press release

European research needs both women and men

Brussels/Vilnius, 20 October – The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the European Commission today addressed the challenge of making research organisations and the higher education sector equal for both women and men by launching a new tool to support the research community: GEAR, the abbreviation for “Gender Equality in Academia and Research”. The two institutions provide universities and research organisations with practical steps to make institutional change in the research sector, which is still dominated by men. The tool was presented to top political decision-makers and leaders of academia in Brussels.

EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Carlos Moedas said: “In Europe, we have come a long way in promoting gender equality in science. But while women now account for about half of the PhD graduates, they are still underrepresented among researchers, full professors and heads of institutions. Therefore I call on research organisations and universities to further promote equal opportunities amongst their staff with the help of gender equality plans and the sharing of best practices.”

The GEAR tool gathers the good practices of universities and research organisations and bases itself on the findings of EU funded projects in the field of Gender Equality Plans and institutional change.

In the global market for ideas, attracting talent is a key for innovation and success. In addition to companies, universities and other research performing organisations have to compete for the best. Making sure that no one is left behind because of their gender or discriminated against on other grounds is also essential.

EIGE’s Director Virginija Langbakk explained: “European research cannot afford not using its full potential. We must make the best use of every person’s knowledge and transform existing barriers into opportunities. The GEAR tool helps universities and research organisations create an environment that empowers and inspires both women and men. Improving our talent pool will also contribute to a more competitive Europe.”

According to the She Figures 2015, women in the European Union represent more than half of graduate students in 2012, but account for only 33 % of all researchers. The gender gaps are even larger among top academics and heads of higher education institutions.

Gatekeeping and vertical gender segregation is still a persistent reality in the research sector. Today we presented a tool to make institutional change happen.

Further information is available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>

The GEAR tool can be found here: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/GEAR>