

## **Promoting Gender Equality in Academia and Research The PLOTINA Project**

- **In the European Union, gender balance has been achieved amongst PhD Graduates. Indeed, in 2012, women made up 40% to 60% of PhD Graduates in every European country. However, the under-representation of women in research positions and senior academic ranks is still persistent. In 2011, women in the EU accounted for only 33 % of researchers (EU-28) and in 2013 women comprised only 21 % of the top-level researchers (grade A), showing very limited progress compared to 2010 (20 %) (SHE Figures, 2015).**
- **A consortium of ten European and extra-European institutions, including six Research Performing Organizations (RPOs), gathered together in the PLOTINA project, funded by the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Union. PLOTINA “Promoting Gender Balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training” aims at enabling the development, implementation and assessment of self-tailored Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) with innovative and sustainable strategies for the RPOs involved. Through its actions, the project will contribute to the achievement of the ERA (European Research Area) gender equality targets, thus fostering excellence, productivity and the social value of innovation. In the academic context, at which it is specifically targeted, PLOTINA will contribute to the dissemination of cultural change based on more inclusive workplaces that respect diversity.**

There is strong horizontal gender inequality in most areas of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) with women being under-represented particularly in some subject areas (e.g. engineering and computer science), both amongst students and professionals. Also, across Europe, we see significant vertical gender inequality in all academic disciplines, and especially in high-level university management ([SHE figures 2015](#)). Despite efforts over the last decade at the European level, gender inequality is still apparent. Furthermore, cultural barriers persist within academic environments such as gender bias, lack of women’s empowerment, all-boys team-networking and ‘homo-sociality’. Structural barriers also remain. For example, organisational aspects affect recruitment and retention of researchers, and work-life balance policies still need to be introduced and implemented in many institutions.

The European dimension of PLOTINA will allow the project to benefit from several national initiatives currently running on gender. By stimulating a gender-aware culture change, promoting career-development of both female and male researchers and integrating the gender/sex dimension in research and teaching, the PLOTINA project tries to contribute to the current unbalanced situation between women and men in science.

PLOTINA's approach includes assessing the current situation in every RPO. An Audit procedure on the status of RPOs, aimed at identifying gender bias, is now being implemented through the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data based on specific Audit Checklists developed in the previous stages of the project. The audit reports drafted by each RPO (process, challenges, data and main findings) will be the basis for designing self-tailored GEPs, for implementing and evaluating Actions and creating a database of resources that can be used by RPOs across Europe to implement their own GEPs. For the implementation of the GEPs, the PLOTINA consortium will also use the GEAR tool launched by EIGE (<http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/GEAR>). A synthesis of the audit reports will be the starting point for the external evaluators to monitor and assess the progress made by RPOs throughout the duration of PLOTINA project.

The final objective is to produce and disseminate a set of modular and adaptable resources for other RPOs across Europe, such as: tools, GEPs, Library of Actions, research and teaching Case Studies and Good Practices. The tools developed by PLOTINA will be available on an open-source project database. Other Research Organizations and Higher Education Institutions will thus be able to use the project tools and resources and implement Gender Equality Plans in their own contexts.

Strongly aligned with the European Research Area's objectives on Gender Equality, PLOTINA will contribute to advancing women's careers in STEM and enhancing the integration of the gender dimension into the design, evaluation and implementation of research and teaching.

**Visit our website for more information about PLOTINA: [www.plotina.eu](http://www.plotina.eu) and register to receive our newsletter.**



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