



1st ACT International Synergy Conference

Building Communities of Practice for gender equality in ERA. An interactive event for practitioners to #ACTonGender in HE & R&I

9:30 – 10:00 Arrival & registration

10:00 - 10:10 **Welcome by the Directorate General for Research and Innovation**

Signe Ratsø, Deputy Director-General of the DG Research & Innovation DDG3, European Commission

10:10 - 10:20 **Welcome from the ACT Coordinator**

Jörg Müller, Senior Researcher, UOC, Spain

10:20 - 10:40 **Brief: introduction to the ACT project**

Maria José Romano, ACT Project Manager, Spain
Key concepts, tools and activities of the ACT project

10:40 - 11:00 **Communities of Practice for advancing gender equality in ERA**

Rachel Palmén, Senior Researcher, Notus, Spain
Benefits and challenges of using Communities of Practice for advancing gender equality in ERA

11:00 - 12:00 **Good practice COP experiences: gender equality in and HE**

Anne-Charlott Callerstig, Researcher, Orebro University, Sweden
Anastasia Zabaniotou, Professor, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Karolina Kublickiene, Associated Professor, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden

12:00 - 12:30 **Open Discussion**

Moderated by Claartje Vinkenburg, Independent Consultant & Associate Professor at VIJ University Amsterdam, Netherlands

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 14:00 **Getting Involved in ACT**

Sybille Reidl, Researcher, Joanneum Research, Austria
Presentation and first insights from the community mapping survey. Introduction to the participatory sessions

14:00 - 14:30 **Networking**

An opportunity to network with other participants, explore the H2020 Project stands and leave your comments and suggestions in our pinboard area.

14:30 - 16:00 **Targeting and maximising CoP**

7 participatory consultation sessions on initial CoP setups and support scenarios. Individual sessions are moderated by 7 ACT Seed partners.

16:00 - 16:30 **Reports to plenary from the group discussions**

16:30 - 17:00 **Conclusions and next steps to advance opportunities and impact of collective action**

Elizabeth Pollitzer, Co-Founder & Director of Portia, UK
Interactive session with contributions from the audience.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 788204.

About the Synergy Conference

The ACT 1st International Synergy Conference will bring together over 100 participants from different fields and disciplines for a day of presentations, workshops and networking. The event is addressed to diverse audiences with the aim to foster synergies and explore the innovation potential on gender equality in R&I and HE across Europe and beyond.

The Conference will start with an introduction to the ACT project, followed by a presentation of the project's use of a Communities of Practice (CoPs) approach to help advance gender equality in ERA, and specifically for improving careers, decision making, and integrating a gender dimension in research. The day will be followed by presentations from three experts in the field of CoPs and gender equality in R&I and HE, which will take us to the lunch break.

After lunch, first insights from the ACT's [Community Mapping survey](#) will be presented, followed by a 30 minutes networking break. Participants can use this time not only to get to create synergies, but also to leave their comments and ideas in the brainstorming area located in the main hall. The main hall will also have a number of tables where Horizon 2020 SwaFs projects promotional materials will be displayed, giving the opportunity to get to know other work undertaken in the field of gender equality in R&I and HE.

The following two hours of the afternoon session will be dedicated to participatory workshops, called Open Sessions, led by each of the Seed partners of the ACT Consortium. Although you will be allocated to one of these workshops (please see below for more information), you are free to change group.

The event will close with an open discussion on conclusions and next steps to advance opportunities and impact of collective action.

Open sessions

The Open sessions will take place in the afternoon of the 1st ACT Synergy Conference, from 14:30 until 16:00. During this hour and a half, each Seed partner will lead a group that will work collaboratively to brainstorm, clarify doubts, exchange information and create synergies with the aim to configure a future CoP. This session is designed to set the ground of a CoP, whether it is one that will start from scratch, one that will be reconfigured, scaled-up or developed further.

Find below a summary of the 7 Seed partners descriptions of their CoP.

Centre for Genomic Regulation (CRG), Spain (LIBRA)

The LIBRA-CoP will have a disciplinary focus on **life sciences**. The members of this CoP will be European research centres or university departments in that field that are committed to institutional change towards gender balanced teams and decision-making bodies, and better consideration of sex and gender in the research content. LIBRA (eu-libra.eu) has substantial experience in considering and acting on the issue of gender equality and it will form a seeding CoP consisting of the 10 LIBRA partners as well its three associated partners of the project, all member of the EU-LIFE alliance (eu-life.eu).

Because of its European coverage, LIBRA will be able to involve more life science institutes and thus build a CoP with a strong impact on the research community. With the LIBRA workshops on “How to design, implement and follow-up a Gender Equality Plan” (eu-libra.eu/events) in February and March this year, LIBRA starts to reach out to the wider research community.

Znanstvenoraziskovalni Center Slovenske Akademije Znanosti In Umenosti (ZRC-SAZU) - Slovenia

We envision CoP to be consisting of people from different academic institutions in Slovenia who are interested in implementing GEP (or some gender equality measures related to ERA priorities) at their institutions. These would be in most cases researchers, who are not gender experts, but who participated in some of the European projects on gender in science/academia. In one or two cases member of CoP would be also an administrative staff from a research organisation which is/was/will be working on such European projects (generally, at Slovenian institutions there is no position of gender equality or diversity officer).

Because of the common structural context, we envision CoP to be covering predominantly institutions in Slovenia. In later phase, potentially it could spread to the region of former Yugoslavia, because of the similar structural challenges.

For the purpose of this CoP we do not envision any disciplinary focus, and both STEM and SSH institutions were invited to participate in Community Mapping Survey. It should be noted, however, that by now, more STEM institutions were involved in European projects.

DEUTCHES ELEKTRONEN-SYNCHROTON (DESY) & Umweltbundesamt (UBA) – Germany (GENERA)

GENERA's future Cop will consist of the already build up and still growing GENERA Network. The GENERA Network is an establishment of an international network for collaboration in gender equality policy in physics between research organisations, associations and consortia worldwide as well as internationally established physics communities and projects.

The UBA supports DESY in continuing and enlarging the GENERA network into a CoP of research institutions involved in the field of science. We are hoping to motivate other federal research institutions (of which there are 50 – mostly smaller ones - in Germany) to get involved as well as smaller (incl. private) research institutions that are engaged in environmental and health research.

Uniwersytet Jagiellonski (UJ) - Poland

We aim at setting up a new CoP that will collect representatives of higher education institutions, research funding organisations and non-governmental organisations operating in Central and Eastern Europe who undertake or are willing to undertake initiatives on gender equality in research and academia. The CoP would bring together both organisations officials and administrators dealing with gender equality issues (namely Rector's Plenipotentiaries, Organization's Ombudsmen or Departmental Officers) as well as researchers and activists working in projects on gender equality.

The focus of the CoP will be on **all academic disciplines** and its operation will potentially cover all three ERA priorities – advancing number of women in R&I and HE, in decision-making processes, incorporating gender dimension in research and teaching content. As

gender equality measures (including gender equality plans – GEPs) are starting to be introduced in research organisations in Central and Eastern Europe, one of the areas of cooperation would be an exchange of knowledge in regards to designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these measures.

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) - Ireland

This CoP is aimed at Research Funding Organisations throughout the European Research Area, with some international participation. Science Foundation Ireland will act as lead partner, bringing together gender equality practitioners in Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) to promote knowledge sharing.

This CoP's work will cover all three ERA priorities on gender equality that are relevant to a Research Funding Organisation:

1. Advancing the number of women in R&I and higher education
2. Enhancing underrepresentation in decision-making processes
3. Incorporating the gender dimension in research

This work will follow on from the Science Europe Working Group on Gender & Diversity and continue to develop: (1) ways to remove bias from the review / evaluation processes, and (2) best practice in incorporating the gender dimension in research.

Haskoli Islands (UoI) – Iceland

Decision-making is one of the three priority areas of intervention defined by the European Research Area, where the aim is to tackle gender imbalances and gender bias in decision-making. The thematic focus of this potential CoP is tackling gender biases in decision-making by the means of Gender Budgeting. In the CoP the emphasis will be on the gendered managerial mechanisms through which organisations formulate budgets and allocation of resources. This emphasis of the CoP goes further than only correcting the gender imbalance in leadership, as that alone is not sufficient condition to eliminate gender biases in decision making. Therefore, for this potential CoP we invite partners from all geographical regions that are willing to engage in and develop gender budgeting in research organisations.

Gender budgeting is a strategy to advance gender equality and efficiency of policy making. It acknowledges that financial decisions, procedures, and processes are not gender neutral or objective technical procedures, but political instruments with gendered implications and consequences. It aims to raise awareness of the different impact of policy and resource allocation and change mechanisms to improve gender biased outcomes.

In the context of research organisations Gender Budgeting is a relatively new strategy to facilitate gender equality. Gender Budgeting was one of the themes of the EU-FP7 project GARCIA (garciaproject.eu), where mapping of financial and managerial systems of six research organisations revealed different gendered impact of market-driven financial and managerial mechanisms. Previous initiatives have focused on how finances can be used more generally to encourage gender equality work in general within the academic system (Erbe 2015; Addabbo, Rodríguez-Moroño and Gálvez-Muños 2015; Rothe et al. 2008).

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) - France

We envision our CoP as a follow up of previous projects where the CNRS or other French partners were involved as INTEGER, GenderTime, TRIGGER, EGERA, etc. We want to address organizational settings and academic cultures which are characterized by modest resources and centralized management, places where, if there is some autonomy at local level, main regulations are taken at the Ministry of Higher Education. This is the case of France and some other EU countries as Italy, for example. In those settings, strategies adapted to rich and autonomous organizations need to be redesigned. We want to put a focus on this specific setting and on the involvement of the management and the policy makers at national level to bring new regulations towards better gender equality.

Our CoP is interested in all geographical areas and will focus on the adequacy of the equality policies with the regional context, the attention to local cultures and specific needs because of the economic or social settings, especially in times of economic crisis and reduction of public spending. We have no specific disciplinary focus.

Practical information

Getting to Brussels from the airport

How to get to the centre from [Brussels Airport](#)

By train

Direct trains run every 15 minutes in both directions. It takes just 17 minute to travel into Central Brussels. Price: €8.60 per day - return trip €17,20.

Please note that any ticket to or from a station in the Brussels Zone entitles you to travel by train all day between all stations in the Brussels Zone on the date of travel.

By bus

At Brussels Airport there are four different platforms used by the bus companies which serves it: De Lijn, MIVB/STIB, Antwerp-Brussels Airport Express and Ouibus. The bus stop at Brussels Airport is located at the ground level of the main terminal. According to the company you travel with, it will depart from any of the available platforms (Platform A, B, C, D and E).

More information on the different bus services can be found [here](#).

By taxi

A taxi to downtown Brussels from the airport takes approximately 25 minutes.

Price: around € 45-50

If you want to go directly to the conference centre from the airport, a taxi takes approximately 30 minutes with fluid traffic.

Price: around €55.

Please note that in heavy traffic the price to both destinations can go up to 80 euros.

How to get to the centre from [Brussels South Charleroi Airport](#)

By bus

The Brussels City Shuttle is the easiest way to travel to the airport from Brussels. There is a bus every 30 minutes and the journey takes 55 minutes. Price: up to 14.20 €.

By train

You can easily connect to Brussels South Charleroi Airport from any Belgian railway station. If you select "Charleroi South Airport" as the departure or destination station, you will receive a combined Train + Bus ticket. With this ticket you can travel to Charleroi-South station by train, then take one of the many buses on Line A, which provides a direct link between the station and the airport terminal and takes just a few minutes. The ticket price includes the train and the bus transfer. A quick, efficient and great-value way to get your journey off to a flying start.

Access to the BEL Conference Centre

TRAIN

From Gare du Nord, you can reach BEL by walking 15 minutes, cycling 5 minutes or by using bus n°14/15/57 (Bus stop : "Armateurs/Steamers). More information [here](#).

METRO lines:

2 & 6 - Station: Yser and Ribaucourt (12 minutes walk)

6 - Station Belgica and Pannenhuis

TRAM lines:

51 - Stop: Sainctelette (20-minute walk)

BUS - STIB lines:

Lines: 14, 15, 89 - Stop: Picard

Lines: 14, 15, 57, 88 - Stop: Armateurs

Check the timetables for Metro, Tram and Bus [here](#).

BUS - DE LIJN lines:

129, 620 - Stop Ribaucourt

213, 214, 230, 231, 232, 233, 240, 241, 242, 243, 245, 246, 250, 251, 260 Stop: Molenbeek St Jean – Ribaucourt

Check De Lijn timetables [here](#).

Bicycle

The BEL is easily accessible by bike starting with the Regional Cyclable Routes (ICRs) along the Canal and also with pedestrian/bike access from the subway station Belgica and Pannenhuis or the Bockstael bridge, through the parc "Thurn & Taxis".

There are several tools to help you work out your routecycling. The [map of Brussels Region](#) indicates, bike paths, bike parks, sale and repair points, street gradients, etc.

Bicycle parking is also available on the Tour & Taxis site right in front of the BEL entrance.

["Villo" station](#) (shared bikes): Rue Picard, 3

Access map



Avenue du port, 86c/3002
1000 Bruxelles
info@bel.brussels



Getting to BEL from THON and Crowne Hotels

The Thon Hotel Brussels city centre and the Crowne are located within a 20-25 minute walk.

Alternatively, the 88 bus (see map [here](#)) is within a few minutes' walk from the hotels, it comes every 12 minutes and it takes 10 minutes to the Bel centre.

ABOUT THE ACT PROJECT

The ACT project

ACT is a Horizon 2020 project that seeks to advance gender equality at universities, research centres and research funding organisations by facilitating collaboration between experienced institutions in the implementation of gender equality plans with less experienced ones. It aims at addressing common needs and improving assessment on gender equality in HE & R&I regarding three fields: gender balance in career progression, gender balance in decision-making positions, and integrating the gender dimension into research content and teaching.

The ACT project will set-up and support an international network of Communities of Practice (CoPs) as agents to develop gender equality actions at research performing and research funding organizations in the European Research Area. For this purpose, ACT will:

- Establish the first European network of Communities of Practice by supporting 7 new or consolidating CoPs working on gender equality in HE & R&I, assess their needs, and offer opportunities to foster synergies and innovation in this field.
- Consolidate and strengthen existing infrastructure for knowledge sharing and mutual learning in the field of institutional change and gender equality across Europe (Knowledge Sharing Hub, online survey tool for gender equality audit and monitoring, and an evaluation framework for CoPs' collaborations and activities).
- Develop a support toolkit, training materials and audio-visual resources for adopting best practices on gender equality by R&I organisations.

Expected impacts

The ACT project lasts for 3 years (from May 2018 to April 2021). Its expected impacts include:

- Improved transnational learning on gender equality knowledge and practices in HE & R&I, ensuring that the research community is better equipped to prevent gender bias.
- Better understanding of how gender issues influence the quality of R&I processes and science knowledge-making.
- Enhanced standards for the assessment of institutional excellence that incorporate gender equality as a criterion of success.
- More systematic and systemic adoption of best tools and practices for the implementation of gender equality plans at research performing and research funding organisations.

The ACT Consortium

The ACT project is coordinated by Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and comprises 17 institutions from 10 different European countries and Argentina:

Fundació Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC) - Spain

Portia - United Kingdom

Notus - Spain

Joanneum Research Forschungsgesellschaft MBH - Austria
Advance HE (formerly Equality Challenge Unit) - United Kingdom
Loughborough University (LoU) - United Kingdom
Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) - Argentina
Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) - Germany
Karolinska Institutet (KI) - Sweden
Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) - Ireland
Umweltbundesamt (UBA) - Germany
Stiftung Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (DESY) - Germany
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) - France
Fundació Centre de Regulació Genòmica (CRG) - Spain
Uniwersytet Jagiellonski (UJ) - Poland
Znanstvenoraziskovalni Center Slovenske Akademije Znanosti In Umenosti (ZRC-SAZU) - Slovenia.
Haskoli Islands (UoI) - Iceland