General Equality Plan (GEP) 2021-2026
European Science Communication Institute
November 2021

1. Introduction

It is of key importance to the European Science Communication Institute (ESCI) to ensure equal opportunities for all staff. Equality at ESCI is considered broadly, not only in terms of gender but also in terms of age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and handicap. This document is therefore called "General Equality Plan" instead of "Gender Equality Plan" as prescribed by the EC.

Specifically, regarding gender, ESCI wants to move beyond considering gender equality based on the normative binary system. This system focusses on woman/man or female/male and excludes gender minorities that do not identify with masculine or feminine status. The term "non-binary" is often used to define genders outside the woman and man binary but also this term might not always comprehensive.

ESCI wants to be inclusive and treat equal all people in pursuing the institute's mission of *empowering scientists and helping them to connect with the public to bridge the gap between science and society*. ESCI is thus committed to support all people and to increase the visibility of their contribution to science and technology, with a specific focus on creating attractive content about non-white-cis-male people in EU projects when the opportunity arises.

2. Current situation at ESCI

Organisational structure

In November 2021, ESCI staff consists of a team of project managers and support staff (10 people), an outreach office (2 people) a creative team (3 people), one administrative manager and one legal advisor. The table does not include in-house consultants (freelancers) who work mainly as project managers. ESCI has a flat hierarchy, with all different teams working at eye level with each other. In daily operations, decisions are taken by the individual project managers, if these decisions have a high financial or organisational impact, the project managers consult with *Mr. Elmar Bartlmae* to find a mutual agreement for the benefit of the project and the organisation as a whole.

	Male	Female	Male (FTE)	Female (FTE)
Management	1	0	1.0	0
Project managers	1	8	1.0	6.0
Project support staff (in training)	0	1	0	1.0
Outreach officers	2	0	1.3	0
Administration	0	1	0	0.9
Creative staff	2	1	2.0	1.0
Legal advisor	0	1	0	0.2
Total	6	12	5.3	9.1

Organisational culture & diversity

ESCI is a truly European organisation, with staff from across the continent with diverse ethnicity and religious backgrounds. ESCI currently has personnel from nine nationalities[1].

Work-life balance

A healthy work-life balance is enabled at ESCI. Overtime may be reasonably compensated. As from 2021, holiday entitlement for employees changed from 25 days to 30 days per calendar year. Flexible scheduling of working hours to a certain extent, including home-office is allowed.

Parenthood

At ESCI, parents are entitled and supported to take parental leave according to German law. Furthermore, as mentioned, employees are allowed to work partly from home and flexibly schedule their working hours, which provides the opportunity to parents to combine childcare with their work assignments.

Accessibility

None of the ESCI office buildings are accessible for wheelchair-users or people with mobility problems.

In the production of videos, ESCI ensures that all spoken language is subtitled, to ensure accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing people.

ESCI´s website is multi-language (English, German and Spanish) to enlarge the accessibility and understandability for different nationalities.

Improvements could still be made on ESCI´s website and websites produced by ESCI by implementing *Alternative Text,* which is not the case yet. Alt Texts ensures that a blind or visually impaired person can read information about images, graphics, or tables out loud.

Creation of compelling content

During the drafting of this report, it was noted that in ESCI´s communication has paid sufficient attention to support female researchers, female leadership and increasing the visibility of women´s contribution to science and technology and highlighting women as role models (see examples at the end of this document).

However, ESCI has not actively contributed to overcoming the gender binary on its website and in its communication so far. ESCI aims to be more inclusive and wants to pay more attention to awareness days related to other non-cis-male people in its content creation when the opportunity arises, related to ESCI´s projects. Specific other goals and actions have been formulated (in Section 4) to overcoming the biased focus on empowering women only.

Recruitment, wages and career opportunities

Job adverts are formulated in a gender-neutral way, as required by German law.

Wages are determined by a formula that includes years of work experience, language skills, education level, specific other skills or experience important for the job (e.g. programming skills, business

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[1] German, Italian, Swedish, Dutch, Hungarian, Irish, US-American, Colombian, Venezuelan.

modelling, video editing) and assigned responsibilities on the position in terms of project outputs or personnel.

Training and skill development for employees is supported but is no institutionalised practice that is being offered to employees at ESCI, except for the project support staff in training.

3. Survey

A survey on the current situation regarding equality among all ESCI employees has been conducted among all ESCI staff in July 2021, to understand how the current situation is perceived and to collect ideas for improvements.

11 employees answered the survey anonymously. The answers revealed that in general employees feel positive about equal treatment at ESCI. Most employees have not experienced gender discrimination in their work.

Several recommendations and ideas to maintain or improve equality at ESCI have been collected through the survey. These have been translated in goals and concrete short-term actions in the next section.

4. Goals & actions

Based on the analysis of the situation at ESCI and the survey among the team, the following goals have been formulated:
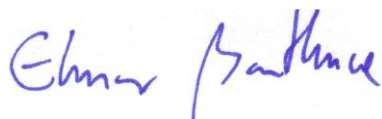
General long-term goals

	General long-term goals	Timing
1	ESCI will adopt a view on gender beyond the binary system and implement this in all its relevant work processes, for example in content creation, on its website, and in setting-up surveys. This includes the adoption of appropriate gender terminology.	Review status in 5 years
2	Maintain the possibility to combine work with parenthood & maintain possibility to flexibly schedule working hours and home office to ensure good work-life balance	Review status in 5 years
3	Maintain a work environment free from sexual harassment	Review status in 5 years
4	When obtaining new office space, this should ideally be accessible for people in wheelchairs and people with mobility problems	When new office space is acquired
5	Produce videos focusing on young scientists' participation in EU projects targeted at younger audiences to encourage them to take an interest in STEM	When opportunity arises
6	Create attractive content about non-cis-male people in EU projects (e.g. transgender, nonbinary, genderfluid, etc.) when the opportunity arises	When opportunity arises
7	Implementing a system to anonymously evaluate CVs and ensuring that contracting of staff does not contain indirect discriminatory elements.	When HR personnel will be hired

Short-term actions

These concrete actions aim to contribute to the long-term goals.

|	Short-term actions	Timing
1	Inform ESCI team about the General Equality Plan to collect employees´ views on challenges and possible improvements.	By March 2022
2	Make the language on the ESCI website more inclusive (e.g. in German using "gender stars", like: Student*in).	Latest by April 2022
3	Add pronouns to the team page on the ESCI website	Early 2022
4	Implement *Alternative Texts* for all images and graphics on the ESCI website	By the end of 2022
5	Organising a training / workshop on unconscious gender biases for staff and follow-up by actively sharing good articles about it among the team	Training in 2022, follow-up continuously
6	Point out the possibilities for training and skill development to all employees in yearly talks.	In talks in 2022
7	Check if job advertisements are formulated in a non-discriminatory way that does speaks to all.	Early 2022

Oldenburg, 29th November 2021

Elmar Bartlmae
Managing Director

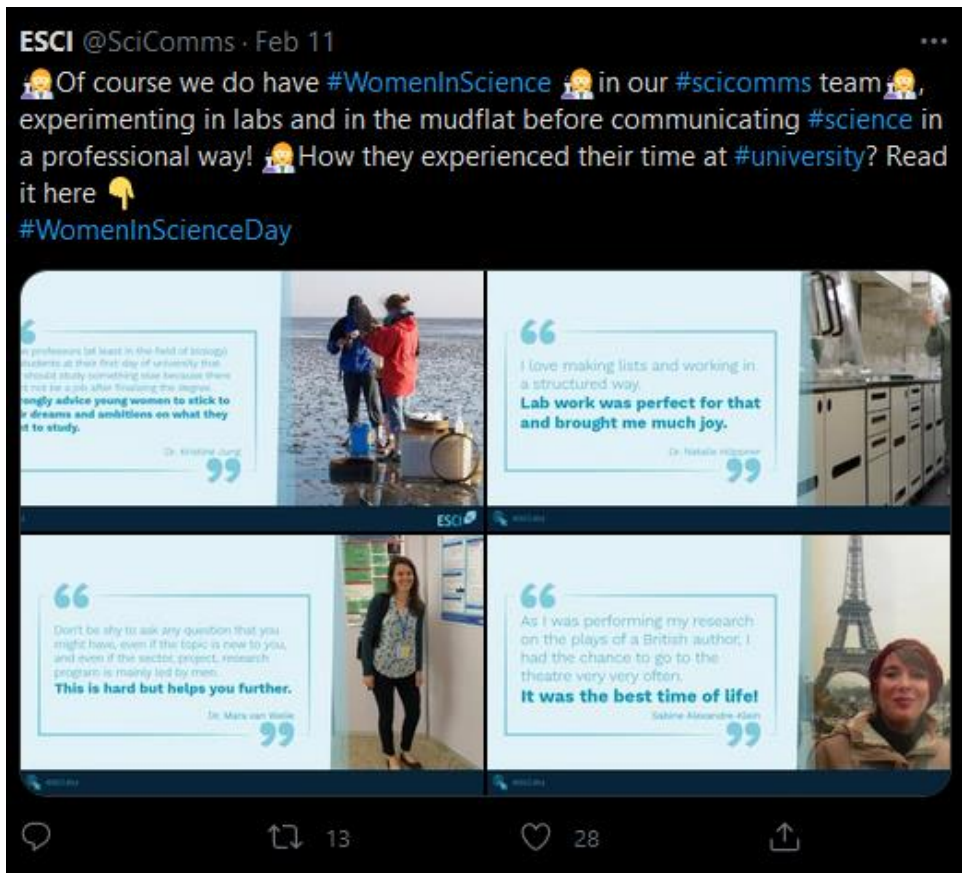# ESCI content on visibility of women in science and technology

Twitter post ESCI channel 12 March 2021
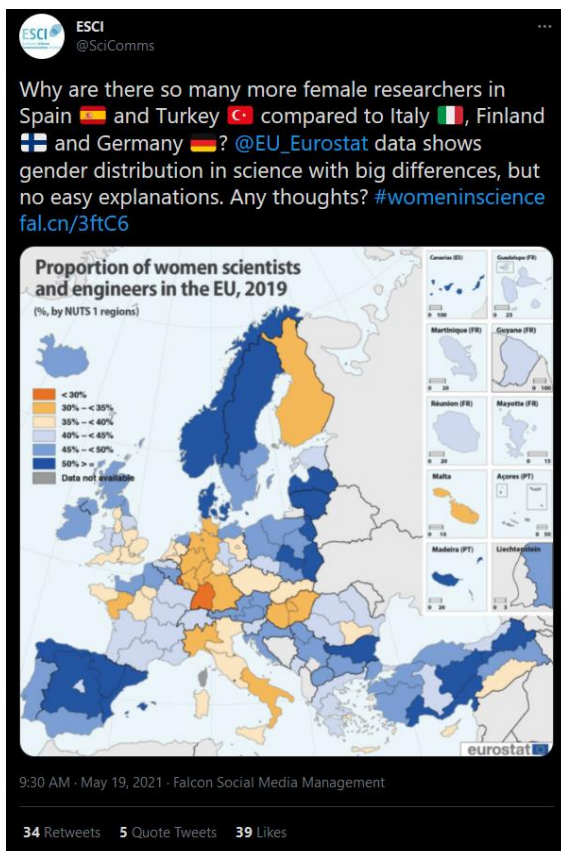
Twitter post ESCI channel 19 May 2021

LinkedIn post #WomenEquality Day Rubizmo project 26 August 2021

Twitter post ESCI channel for Women in Science Day 11 February 2021