



REPORT ON GENDER EQUAL DECISION- MAKING PROCESSES AND BODIES

DELIVERABLE D4.3 [PUBLIC REPORT]

WP 4 – CREATING GENDER-EQUAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND BODIES

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronym	
AA	Affirmative Action
BBC	Beit Berl Academic College (Israel)
CoPs	Communities of Practices
CHE	Council for Higher Education (Israel)
D	Deliverable
DE	Germany
EC	European Commission
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EO	Equal Opportunities
GE	Gender Equality
GEI	Gender Equality Index
GEO	Gender Equality Officer
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
GGGI	Global Gender Gap Index
HE	Horizon Europe
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HES	Higher Education Sector
H2020	Horizon 2020
IFAM	Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Angewandten Forschung e.V. (Germany)
IL	Israel
M	Month
NIB	Nacionalni Institut za Biologijo (Slovenia)
NTL	National Team Leaders
PI	Principal Investigator
PT	Portugal
RFO	Research Funding Organisation
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TA	Transfer Agent
T	Task
UAVER	University of Aveiro (Portugal)
UNIZA	Zilinska Univerzita v Ziline (Slovakia)
WEF	World Economic Forum
WP	Work Package

ABOUT THE CHANGE PROJECT

The main aim of CHANGE is to *support research performing organisations (RPOs) to design and implement gender equality plans*. This will be achieved by involving key actors, called *Transfer Agents (TAs)*, within each organisation who will together with the core consortium partners transmit co-produced gender equality knowledge inside their institutions.

This innovative approach will ensure the *promotion and sustainable institutionalisation* of the gender equality action plans (GEPs) beyond the project duration.

Furthermore, through mutual learning and networking CHANGE will enable partners to become resource centres skilled to provide gender equality knowledge and expertise to other RPOs and also RFOs (research funding organisations).

With such a co-production of knowledge approach and by building *communities of practice* among RPOs in each participating region, support and mentorship structures will be established and work even after the project is finished. Regular inclusion and exchange with national and European stakeholders (policy makers, researchers, ministries etc.) ensures a spill-over effect of CHANGE results to other RPOs and RFOs in their respective countries as well as with other ministries in the whole European area.

As one of many results, CHANGE will produce policy papers based on this strategic stakeholder involvement including actual policy makers and relevant stakeholders in the policy paper production. With this approach we aim at closing the research-to-action gap, respectively the theory-to-practice gap. Thus, CHANGE contributes to a *structural change towards gender equality in the European Research Area* by stimulating institutional cultural change towards gender equal work environments in RPOs and fostering the importance of gender dimension inclusive research and innovation programmes in RFOs.

For more information see <http://www.change-h2020.eu>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report corresponds to the third deliverable of the WP4 and concerns to decision-making processes and bodies in the CHANGE consortium. More specifically, it makes a global evaluation on the implementation of quick, middle and long term actions to enhance gender equality (GE) while providing important information on the implementation and acceptance of structural changes needed to ensure GE in science and research. It is organised around 3 main themes of work developed in the framework of the WP4: i) GE in the frame of national contexts, in which the CHANGE team analysed and cross-compared the participating countries' legal frameworks to promote gender-balance in the economic, political and social contexts and the GE related to these domains for the CHANGE participating countries. The second main topic specifies GE in the higher education sector by looking at some GE indicators in higher education in the frame of national contexts (SHE Figures 2021). The third and last main topic of this report pertains to the actions (quick, middle and long-term) taken by the participating countries to enhance gender-equal decision-making processes and bodies. These actions report to changes in institutional environment and leadership, in institutional decision-making processes and bodies, to the good practices to increase GE in decision-making processes and bodies, and, at last, to the main barriers and obstacles experienced by CHANGE implementing partners that prevent a higher presence of women in decision-making bodies before the GEP was implemented, during its implementation and in the future.

Conclusions evidence that gender topics are sometimes perceived as an “unnecessary”, and, although women have succeeded in entering the academic career they are still excluded from formal outstanding academic positions, GEPs have thus a potential impact in improving gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions. CHANGE implementing partners have drawn on both formal and informal activities to target this problem and increase awareness for the needs and benefits of GE in the institutions.

1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the CHANGE report corresponds to the third deliverable of the WP4. Being a public deliverable (D4.3), it concerns to decision-making processes and bodies in the CHANGE consortium and aims to make a global evaluation on the implementation of quick, middle and long term actions to enhance gender equality (GE) - resulting mainly from the work developed in the framework of the WP4 between M9 and M51. Along with the reflections on WP3 and WP6 on all short-term ('quick'), middle- and long term actions that were defined and implemented in CHANGE implementing partners, this report intends to provide important information on the implementation and acceptance of structural changes needed to ensure GE in science and research.

This report includes the analysis of macro (national/European level) and micro (institutional level) level data, seeking also to provide a holistic view with potential to help to reflect on and assess the contribution of policies (European, national and institutional) to increase GE in decision-making processes and bodies in the RPOs, RFOs and HEIs.

The analysis undertaken, strongly based on the experience(s) of the CHANGE implementing partners, also aims at identifying good practices, i.e. successful actions that can, in the future, be implemented in other RPOs, RFOs and HEI to accelerate the process of institutional change to enhance GE in decision-making processes and bodies.

The WP4 leader was UAVR, but all participating RPOs contributed to this report. In fact, the work presented here is based on the intermediate results presented in D4.1 and D4.2, both developed under the CHANGE project. The D4.1, entitled "Gender Benchmarking report" was submitted in M7; the D4.2, entitled "Monitoring actions to enhance gender-equal decision-making processes and bodies" report was submitted in M30. In the preparation of this report, the information provided by CHANGE Implementing partners – namely through the completion of a support document called "self-assessment of 'creating gender equal decision-making processes and bodies'" between June 20th and 30th 2022– was also taken into account.

In order to present the evaluation of the implementation of the actions defined by the different CHANGE implementing partners to enhance gender-equal decision-making processes and bodies, the report is organised as follows:

- **Section 2.** It broadly analyses the levels of GE and its progress in recent years in the countries of the five CHANGE implementing partners (DE, IL, PT, SK and SI).
- **Section 3.** This section provides more detailed information on the situation of women in the higher education sector in each country.
- **Section 4.** Section 4 is composed of 5 sub-sections:
 - 4.1. Identification of the actions implemented.
 - 4.2. Exploration of the main changes in institutional environment and leadership.
 - 4.3. Exploration of main changes in institutional decision-making processes and bodies.
 - 4.4. Good practices to increase GE in decision-making processes and bodies within the CHANGE project.
 - 4.5. The main barriers and obstacles experienced by all partners.
- **Section 5.** In this section is provided main conclusions.

2 GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FRAME OF NATIONAL CONTEXTS

2.1 GENDER EQUALITY INDICES IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Considering that the national environment, with its social, economic and political contexts affects GE, at the beginning of the project in 2018 (MI-M7), an analysis was made in regards gender equality in the national context of each of the participating countries, so that we could better understand the gender composition in decision-making processes and bodies in the CHANGE consortium (D4.1). In this section, we intend to revisit and update the information gathered at the time and identify the main changes in the gender profile of each country to which the CHANGE implementing partner’s institutions belong, including economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and political empowerment. Another analysis has been taken recently (2022) to have a 4-year perspective and estimate of national trends regarding gender aspects in political, social and economic dimensions in each country’s legislative framework regarding women’s participation in the labour force, Equal Opportunities (EO) and Affirmative Action (AA), including parental leave provisions. (M1-M7)

The **Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI)**, compiled by the World Economic Forum (WEF), provides a useful snapshot of how the countries are ranked on key employment, educational, health and political empowerment indicators (WEF, 2021). The 2017 and 2021 GGGI results for each of the five CHANGE partner’s countries are presented in the following table (Table 1):

Table 1 - Global Gender Gap Index 2017 and 2021

Index/ Country	Global Gender Gap Index Ranking		Economic Participation and Opportunity (F/M ratio)		Educational attainment (F/M ratio)		Health and Survival		Political Empowerment (F/M ratio)	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
DE										
2017	12	0.778	43	0.720	96	0.970	70	0.975	10	0.447
2021	11	0.796	62	0.706	55	0.997	75	0.972	10	0.509
IL										
2017	44	0.721	65	0.681	1	1.00	98	0.971	47	0.232
2021	60	0.724	65	0.705	1	1.00	121	0.964	65	0.227
PT										
2017	33	0.734	35	0.730	70	0.992	55	0.977	43	0.240
2021	22	0.775	38	0.746	76	0.992	73	0.972	26	0.390
SK										
2017	74	0.694	79	0.662	1	1.00	1	0.980	89	0.135
2021	77	0.712	80	0.682	1	1.00	1	0.980	82	0.184
SI										
2017	7	0.805	13	0.801	1	1.00	1	0.980	11	0.440
2021	41	0.741	15	0.803	28	1.00	49	0.977	83	0.184

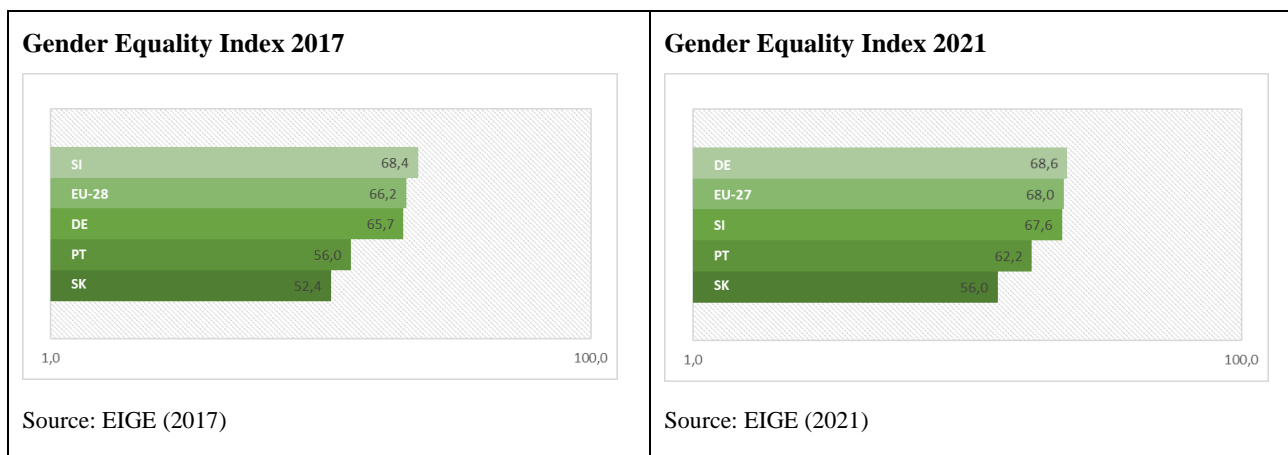
Source: WEF (2017); WEF (2021)

In 2017, among the five countries, SI and SK were the two with the best (SI) and worst (SK) positions in the rank of the GGGI ranking. However, data from 2021 reveals some changes and, although SK continues to be the country with the worst results, DE become the best-positioned country in the GGGI ranking (Table 1). As can also be seen in Table 1, in 2021 this set of countries maintains the highest scores in the female/male ratio in the educational attainment – similar to what happened in 2017. Attention should be paid, however, to SI, which was ranked 1st in educational attainment, but in 2021 it was ranked in the 28th place. At the same time, the higher differences between countries still occurs in the political empowerment sub-dimension, with SK and also Slovenia presenting the lowest scores.

The data presented in table 1, also shows some divergence in the evolution of the levels of equality in this particular set of countries between 2017 and 2021: While PT and DE saw their positions improving in the ranking – PT made the most progress, rising 11 positions (from position 33 to 22; DE rose one place in the ranking, from 12 to 11 place) – SK, SI and IL fell in the ranking. The most significant drop was that of SI, which went from position 7 to 41 (it fell 34 positions in the ranking); followed by IL, which went from position 44 to 60 (a fall of 16 positions); and, finally, SK, with a slight fall of 3 positions (from 77 to 74).

Through the **Gender Equality Index (GEI)**, a composite indicator developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), it is also possible to compare and analyse the situation of the consortium countries that belong to the European Union. Figure 1 and 2 shows the results of PT, DE, SK and SI in this index, compared to the European Union (EU) average in 2017 and 2021.

Figure 1 – Gender Equality Index (2017 and 2021)



The GEI measures gender gaps between women and men in six core domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health. The scores assigned to EU member states range between 1 for total inequality and 100 for full equality. From the figure 1, it is possible to see that in 2017 only SI has an index above the average of the EU-28, with DE, PT and SK scoring below the average. The last two countries (PT and SK) have the lowest scores in that year, revealing more difficulties in promoting GE.

In 2021 the situation is a little different and, as the GGGI also shows, DE has improved its score and, according to GEI, it is now the only CHANGE partner’s country scoring above the European average. PT, SK and SI scored below the EU-27 average in 2021. However, it should be noted that in addition to DE, PT and SK also saw their overall EIGE score improving and only SI shows some backwardness in the score when compared to 2017. These results should, however, be viewed with some caution because the GEI 2017 and GEI 2021 data are mostly from 2015 and 2019, respectively.

2.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AIMING TO PROMOTE GENDER-BALANCE IN THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

A relevant difference between countries that can help explain the distinct positions in the previous ranks is the legal framework characterising each national gender environment. In this section an analysis of the legal framework to promote gender-balance is presented.

First, and foremost it is important to highlight that the principle of equal rights for women and men is stipulated by Basic laws in DE, IL, PT, SI and SK.

In DE, GE is guaranteed since 1949, in the Article 3 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of DE – the German constitution. In IL, it is assured since 1951 with Women’s Equal Rights Law, 5711 – 1951, where it is stated: “A man and a woman shall have equal status with regard to any legal proceeding [...]”. Equal rights between men and women are stipulated in the Portuguese Constitution since 1974. In SI and SK the attempts to stipulate equal rights are more recent. GE was defined at the very beginning of SI’s independence in 1991; in SK the first commitments to GE started in the early 1990s (e.g. the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action). In the four European countries (DE, PT, SI and SK), gender-equality policies were further developed with the influence of European Union (EU).

To better understand the GE national contexts, which are relevant to frame each RPO, the legal framework aiming to promote gender-balance in the economic, political and social spheres will be analysed for each country in the following subsections, by updating the data based on changes that have occurred since 2018 (D4.1).

2.2.1 Economic context

Concerning the legal framework to promote women’s integration in institutions’ top decisions, there are - as it was the case in 2018 - significant differences between the five countries. Anyway, it can be verified that: 1) most of the them have policies defining positive actions to improve women’s position, both in public and private institutions (only IL has restricted this policy to public institutions with all the others including positive actions to promote women’s participation also in boards of corporate institutions); 2) there is a general concern in promoting a higher participation of women in decision-making processes (except in SK) (Table 2).

Table 2 - Economic Context - Legal framework to promote women's integration in institutions top decisions

Country / EO Law	DE	IL	PT	SK	SI
Women’s quota on supervisory boards in private companies					
2018	√	X	√	X	√
2022	√	X	√	X	√
Women’s quota on public institutions					
2018	√	√	√	X	√
2022	√	√	√	X	√

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In general terms, it can be said that the economic context in 2022 remains similar to the one in 2018. Nevertheless, regarding the initiatives promoting gender-balanced participation in corporate/public institutions decision-making, some of the most recent legislative advances should be mentioned.

In **DE**, several companies have already been committed to have more women in management positions for several years as part of a voluntary declaration. Under a resolution passed by the German parliament on March 6, 2015, large companies in DE are required to have at least 30% women on their supervisory boards (Act on the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Leadership Positions; entered into force on January 1, 2016). The law does not represent a pure women's quota, but a gender quota. More recently, on November 20, 2020, representatives of the governing coalition agreed on a women's quota on management boards. In the future, at least one member of listed companies and companies with equal codetermination with more than three members is to be a woman. A minimum quota was agreed for companies in which the federal government holds a majority stake, public corporations (e.g., health insurance funds), pension and accident insurance providers, and the Federal Employment Agency. On January 6, 2021, the German government accordingly passed the Second Leadership Positions Act (FüPoG II). The Bundestag approved it on June 11, 2021 in a version amended by the Family Committee.

In **PT**, Law No. 62/2017 of August 1, which came into force on January 1, 2018, established a system of balanced representation between women and men in the administrative and supervisory bodies of public sector business entities and listed companies. According to this law, all public sector companies should have at least one third (33.3%) of women in their administrative and supervisory bodies since 2018. In listed companies, this proportion could not be lower than 20% after the first elective general assembly on January 1, 2018, and one third (33.3%) from January 2020 onward. More recently - and following on from this law - Law No. 26/2019 of March 28 was approved, establishing, for the first time in PT, the balanced representation regime in the Public Administration. This law established a minimum parity threshold of 40% for the appointment of top managers in the direct and indirect administration of the state, including public institutes and public foundations, and in local government. This threshold also became applicable, as of January 1, 2020, to the governing and management bodies of public HEI, as well as to the deliberative, executive, supervisory, and oversight bodies of public professional associations and other association-based public entities. In these cases, in the lists presented to elective bodies, the first two places cannot be occupied by people of the same sex, and in the remaining lists, there cannot be more than two people of the same sex in a row.

There have been voluntary efforts to raise awareness and increase women's representation on boards of private companies in **IL**, but these efforts are not mandatory under any legislation. In 2020, the Government resolution no. 454 determined several measures to promote the inclusiveness of women in civil service and to reach 50% representation, e.g., obligatory reporting to the ministers regarding the percentage of women in senior and leading staff and establishing a data base of women candidates to senior positions. Also in 2020, the Amendment no. 6 to The Equal Pay for Male and Female Employees Law, 1996 was published by the government. This amendment imposes a duty on all employers employing more than 518 employees, to publish information about the average wage differentials between male and female employees. The first reports should have been published by 1 June 2022, in relation to 2021.

2.2.2 Political context

According to the data presented previously from the Global Gender Report (2017 and 2021), it is in the political arena that the scores on GE are lower for all the countries when compared with the scores for the other GE dimensions.

Concerning the five CHANGE partner countries under study, a quick cross-country analysis of policies formulated and implemented to promote a higher participation of women in the political arena reveals that SK is the only country where these measures do not exist. However, in general terms, some progress has been made between 2018 and 2022 and currently there are positive changes in policies concerning women participation in politics not only in PT and SI, but also in DE and to some extent in IL (Table 3).

Table 3 - Political context - Legal framework to promote women's participation in political decision-making processes

Country / EO Law	DE	IL	PT	SK	SI
Women's quota on political parties					
2018	X	X	√	X	√
2022	√	X*	√	X	√
Other initiatives to promote women's participation in politics					
2018	√	√	X	X	√
2022	√	√	X	X	√

*There are women's quotas only in municipal elections.

In **DE** a women's quota on political parties was established recently. On July 8, 2020, the structure and statutes commission of the then governing party agreed on a women's quota for party offices and candidates for mandates. The quota model prescribes a minimum proportion of women on executive committees from the district level onwards, starting in 2021. Initially, a 30 percent quota is to apply, followed by 40 percent from 2023 and full parity from 2025.

In **IL**, there are currently women's quotas in political parties in municipal elections. Several legislation proposals were initiated to promote women's representation in national elections as well, such as suggesting financial bonuses to political parties with higher rates of women. Unfortunately, these proposals have not been yet accepted as law by the parliament.

In **PT** there have also been some improvements. In 2019, the *Law on Parity in Collegiate Representative Bodies of Political Power*, as a result of an amendment to the Organic Law no. 3/2006, 21st August, which increased from 33% to 40% the minimum threshold of parity applicable to lists of candidates submitted to the Assembly of the Republic, the European Parliament and to the elective bodies of local authorities, as well as to the membership of parish councils. This threshold must also be complied with in the lists for the boards of the deliberative bodies of the local authorities. Another important change brought by this Law is related to the mechanisms that aim to guarantee its effectiveness. Unlike what happened until then, this new law determines that, in case of non-compliance with the parity rule, lists will be rejected if they are not corrected to comply with the 40% (the previous regime only required a reduction in the subsidy that parties receive for electoral campaigns).

In **SI** there have been no significant changes since 2004-2005, with current policies being implemented gradually. For example, the Local Elections Act, amended in 2005, provides that each list of candidates includes at least 40% of candidates of the opposite gender, while spots in the first half of the list shall be allocated alternately by gender. These requirements were not implemented immediately. There was a transitional period, with 20 per cent quota in 2006 local elections and 30% quota in 2010 elections, while the 40% quota was fully implemented in the 2014 local elections.

2.2.3 Social context

Regarding the social dimension, related with support to maternity and working hours, despite differences there is a high consistency between the five CHANGE partner`s countries in 2022: all of them have support to maternity and parental leave, as well as support to family. Besides that, the working hours also remain quite similar between them (Table 4).

Table 4 - Social context - Working hours, maternity protection and parental leave

Country / EO Law	DE	IL	PT	SK	SI
Maternity protection					
2018	√	√	√	√	√
2022	√	√	√	√	√
Parental Leave					
2018	√	√	√	√	√
2022	√	√	√	√	√
Working day/week					
2018	No more than 48 hours per week/ 10 hours maximum day	No more than 45 hours per week/ 8 hours/ 10 hours maximum day	40 hours week / working day - 8 hours	40 hours a week	40 hours week / working day - 10 hours
2022	No more than 48 hours per week/ 10 hours maximum day	No more than 42 hours per week/ no more than 8 hours per day on Sun-Thu and no more than 7 hours per day on Fri.	40 hours week / working day - 8 hours ¹	40 hours a week	40 hours week / working day - 10 hours
Law protection to give support to family					
2018	√	√	√	√	√
2022	√	√	√	√	√

In **DE**, to compensate for corona-related disadvantages, there were some changes to parental benefits during the corona crisis for 2020. The special regulations were extended until December 31, 2021 and new regulations of the parental allowance reform have been adopted since September 2021:

- Parents of premature children will receive an additional month of parental allowance if their children are born at least six, eight, twelve or 16 weeks premature. This is intended to give parents more time to compensate for possible delays in their children's development.
- The working hours for mothers and fathers who want to work part-time while receiving parental allowance is extended from 30 hours per week to 32 hours per week.
- If both parents work part-time and thus share the care of the child or children, they receive an additional parental allowance for couples (the partnership bonus). This has been increased to an average of 24 to 32 hours per week (if both parents work), instead of the previous 25 to 30 hours per week.
- Top earners are not entitled to parental allowance. The income limit was change here: from 500,000 euros per year for couples, to 300,000 euros.

¹ Working hours in the public sector are 35 per week, 7 hours/day.
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Since 2018, the father's mandatory parental leave has been extended in **PT** (Law 90/2019) from 15 to 20 working days, consecutive or interpolated. This' 20 days leave, corresponding to the payment of a parental allowance, must be taken within 6 weeks of the child's birth - five of these days must be taken consecutively immediately after the child's birth (Law 90/2019, article 43 no. 1). After this parental leave, the father is also entitled to another five working days of leave, consecutive or interspersed, provided they are taken at the same time as the mother's initial parental leave (Law 90/2019, article 43 no. 2). The father is also entitled to three days off work to accompany the pregnant woman to prenatal appointments (Law 90/2019, article 46 no. 5).

Also in Portugal, the “telework” regime was revisited through the Law 83/2021 of December 6. This law added a new article to the Labour Code (Law 7/2009 of February 12) which, among other measures, extends the right to telework - when it is compatible with the activity performed and the employer has the resources and means to do so - to workers with children up to 8 years old in cases where both parents meet the conditions for the exercise of activity under telework, provided that it is exercised by both in successive periods of equal duration within a maximum reference period of 12 months (article 3 no. 1 a). According to this new law, the right to telework is also granted to single-parent families or in situations in which only one of the parents, demonstrably, meets the conditions for telework (article 3 no. 1 a). According to this new law, the worker who has the status of non-main informal caregiver is also entitled to exercise the activity in a telework regime, for the maximum period of four consecutive or interpolated years (article 3, no. 5).

In **IL**, the work week has shortened in 2018 to 42 hours (instead of 43 hours). Besides that, several laws and amendments were determined to assist pregnant women, women who receive fertility treatments and women during maternity leave. Other important measures have also been introduced and/or reinforced:

- Expansion of the “Banking Availability Covenant” to reduce economic violence against women who are victims of violence (originally launched in 2016 and expanded in 2018); A voluntary covenant that was formulated together with the Association of Banks and the banking system to reduce economic violence against battered women in shelters and half-way houses. The updated version enables continuous support for an additional year after the women leave the shelter. In addition, the banks will adopt the shelters, and will help them by providing financial knowledge and education programs, including periodic lectures on various financial topics.
- Prohibition on Prostitution Consumption Law (Temporary Order and Legislative Amendment) 5779-2019: The purpose of this law is to reduce prostitution by prescribing a prohibition on prostitution consumption, as part of a combined move that includes education and information to the public and expanding the manners of treatment and rehabilitation for populations in prostitution, acknowledging the harmful aspects of prostitution and the damages it involves.
- In June 2022 the Parliament’s Labour and Welfare Committee approved reforms making it easier for women to access abortions at up to nine weeks at clinics operated by health funds instead of the procedure only being carried out at hospitals. Women will also be able to submit digital authorisation forms to the committee and will no longer be forced to appear in person.

In sum, in **IL** it seems that substantial efforts are being constantly made to support women and to promote GE by providing legal frameworks in economic, political, and social aspects. However, it seems that more legislation has been promoted in recent years on a social context and less so on economic and political contexts. Further investigation should be made to identify the reasons for these differences.

In **SI**, maternity leave lasts 105 days and maternity benefit amounts to 100 % of the basis, with no ceiling on the amount of maternity benefit. Moreover, SI ensures that fathers can be involved in care for their children from an early age. Fathers have the right to 30 days of paternity leave; paternity benefit amounts to 100 % of the basis and may not be more than 2.5 times the amount of the average monthly wage. The first 15 days (full or partial absence from work) shall be used until the child reaches 6 months of age, while the remaining 15 days (full or partial absence from work) may be used until the child completes the first year of primary schooling.

Mothers and fathers are entitled to 130 days of parental leave each (altogether 260 days). Parental leave is extended in the event of the birth of twins or more children at the same time, a prematurely born child, or a child who needs special care. The amount of parental benefit is equal to 100% of the basis and may not be more than 2.5 times the amount of the average monthly wage. Both parents have the individual right to 130-day childcare leave. However, mothers may transfer 100 days to fathers, while 30 days are not transferable, but fathers may transfer all 130 days to mothers.

Besides maternity, paternity and parental leaves, families in SI are entitled to additional family allowances:

- **Parental allowance.** It is a monthly allowance for parents who are not entitled to childbirth allowance.
- **Childbirth allowance.** It is a lump sum for the purchase of clothing and other necessities, received by one of the parents.
- **Large family allowance.** It is an annual payment for families with three or more children.
- **Child care allowance.** It is a monthly payment for a child requiring special care.
- **Partial payment for loss of earnings.** It is a monthly payment for parents or guardians/foster parents caring for a child with a serious mental developmental disorder or serious physical impairment.
- **Assistance in the purchase of vignettes.** Large families with 4 or more children that own or use a vehicle classified in the toll class B (large cars) are entitled to a yearly allowance for the purchase of the motorway vignette.

In addition to family benefits, parents have the right to part-time work, which can be exercised by one of the parents who cares for and protects the child up to the age of three.

Also, the part-time work option can be used by one of the parents who cares for and protects at least two children until the completion of the first grade of elementary school of the youngest child, whereby one year of using the right to work part-time than full-time is non-transferable for each parent.

The data and the comparative country analysis provide evidence that there are important initiatives in the national legal framework of all countries and that there have been some improvements in the social context (e.g. DE, IL, PT) between 2018 and 2022 that can be seen as positive in facilitating the design and implementation of GEPs in HEI. In fact, in 2018 most countries (except SK) already had in place quotas of women in public institutions - since most HEI are public institutions, this is highly relevant. Furthermore, maternity and paternity protection was (and still is) a concern in the five countries – although some relevant differences can be found in this field, notably with regard to the time allowed for mothers and fathers to care for the child. Regarding work-life balance, all countries seem to have concerns about ensuring non-discrimination in the workplace based on gender since the beginning of the CHANGE project (Table 4).

3 GENDER EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FRAME OF NATIONAL CONTEXTS

3.1 SOME INDICATORS OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Gender in/equality in higher education is usually analysed on the basis of the gender composition of the student and staff population in HEI (namely researchers and academics). The field of study of women and men and the gender composition in the different academic grades are important indicators to analyse the evolution of the well-known phenomena of horizontal and vertical segregation, respectively. The most recent data show that gender inequalities have been decreased among the student community in recent decades (Tight, 2012; European Commission, 2021). In fact, the presence of women has increased not only in first degrees but also in postgraduate and doctoral studies. In the set of countries analysed here (DE, IL, PT, SK and SI), in 2012 women were the majority of PhD graduates only in PT (accounting for 56%); however, **in 2019 (the last year**

with available data) women are already the majority in all countries except SK (where they account for 49.2%) (Table 5).

Table 5 - Indicators of Gender Inequality in Higher Education

Indicators/countries	DE	IL	PT	SK	SI
Proportion (%) of women among PhD graduates (2018) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 27)	60.8%	53.1%	52.9%	49.2%	54%
Proportion of women among researchers (2018) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 97)	53%	n.a.	43,3%	41,2%	32,3%
Proportion of women among researchers in the HE sector (2018) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 105)	53.3%	n.a.	49,8%	46.2%	41.8%
Proportion (%) of part-time employed among researchers in HES, by sex (2019) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 153)	n.a.	n.a.	F: 6% M: 2.5%	F: 3.6% M: 6,8%	F:9.9% M:7.9%
Proportion (%) of researchers in HES working under 'precarious' contracts, by sex (2019) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 155)	n.a.	n.a.	F: 11.4% M: 8%	F:14.5% M:8.8%	F:4.7% M:1.5%
Proportion of women among academic staff (2018) (SHE Figures 2021, table 6.1, p. 184) – total	n.a.	47.96%	49.83%	45.81%	45.92%
Grade A	n.a.	19.45%	27.15%	27.23%	32.95%
Grade B	n.a.	35.70%	41.36%	41.18%	40.77%
Grade C	n.a.	51.53%	49.41%	50.64%	52.18%
Grade D	n.a.	57.25%	53.16%	59.96%	49.59%
Glass Ceiling Index (2015-2018) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 194)	1.73-1.33	1.87-2.33	1.70-1.71	1.64-1.74	1.30-1.39
Proportion of women heads of institutions in the higher education sector (2019) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 200)	23.2%	21.6%	27.2%	22.9%	32.7%
Proportion of women heads of universities or assimilated institutions based on capacity to deliver PhDs (2019) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 201)	n.a.	0%*	20,5%*	21,9%	31,8%
Proportion of women on boards, members and leaders (2019) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 203)	n.a.	26.9%	35%	21,3%	44%
Ratio of FWCI (Field-weighted citation impact) from women to men based on fractional authorship on publications in all fields of R&D (2019) (1= parity) (SHE Figures 2021, p. 278)	0.7	1	0.8	0.8	0.85

*Data form 2018

Source: European Commission (2021)

Although women are the majority of doctoral students, the proportion of women tends to be lower in the group of researchers in the CHANGE partner's countries under study. In 2012, PT was the country with the highest proportion of women researchers in higher education. However, despite a slight increase in Portugal between

2012 and 2021, currently DE has the highest rates in this field, with 53% of women researchers in higher education sector (Table 5).

In 2019, among the countries of the CHANGE consortium, women researchers were more prone to part-time employment than men. The proportion of women researchers working part-time in the HES was larger than that of men in two of the three countries for which data were available (Table 5). SI is the only country where the proportion of men researchers working in part-time employment exceeded the equivalent proportion of women researchers – the difference between these proportions was 3.2 percentage points (p.p.) (this trend is only found in five more EU-27 Member States and Associated Countries: Czechia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania (European Commission 2021: 153).

It is well-known in the literature how working conditions have been worsening for researchers in higher education (Carvalho & Diogo 2017; Carvalho, Diogo & Vilhena 2022). Precarious' working contracts of researchers in the higher education sector are still more common for women than for men in all countries with available data (Table 5). SK is, however, the country where women are most exposed to this type of contract (14.5%), followed by PT (14.4%). In SI, the proportion of women researchers working under precarious contracts is less than 5%.

Although notable progress has been made in recent years, the vertical segregation is still evidenced in all countries with available data (Table 5). In 2018 women are more than 50% in the initial positions (Grade D) in PT, SK and IL. However, in the top positions (Grade A) the highest proportion is below 28% in all three countries – in 2013 the country with the highest percentage of women in Grade A was PT, with 25%. The improvements in this area are therefore remarkable. Also noteworthy is the current situation in SI which, despite being the country with the lowest proportion of women in Grade D (49.59%), achieves a proportion of women in Grade A higher than 30% in 2018 - the highest among the countries analysed.

In the same line, in 2019 - as in 2014 - the proportion of women heads of institutions in the higher education sector as well as the proportion of women on boards, members and leaders was still below 30% for all CHANGE partner countries with available data (with the exception of SI). It should be highlighted, however, that in general terms, and with the exception of PT where the proportion of women heads of institutions in the higher education sector has reduced, all CHANGE partner's countries show improvements in these indicators between 2014 and 2019. It should also be noted that in PT and SI, between 2014 and 2018, the proportion of 'women on boards, members and leaders', increased by more than 10 p.p. (Table 5).

These data reveal that despite progress in women's participation in higher education as students and in the initial grades as academic staff, the positions of power are still dominated by men in the five countries to which the CHANGE project partners belong. The institutional environment, the characterization and the progress achieved on gender balance in decision-making bodies of each consortium institution between 2018 and 2022 will be presented and analysed in the following section.

4 ACTIONS TO ENHANCE GENDER-EQUAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND BODIES

4.1 CHANGE INSTITUTIONAL QUICK, MIDDLE AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS

The general methodological approach of CHANGE is built up on a condensed version of Kotter’s model on how to achieve structural change in institutions that includes five phases. These five phases aim to support the achievement of structural change in RPOs and RFOs towards more gender-inclusive science and research (Figure 1).

Figure 1 - CHANGE model



Source: Technical Annex Grant Agreement CHANGE (2018: 12)

Actions started to be implemented in phase three of the CHANGE project. However, the benchmarking phase – where institutional key sites of inequality were initially identified by CHANGE implementing partners – was very important because it allowed for the identification of systemic discrepancies, particularly in relation to decision-making bodies. Based on this mapping of key sites of inequality, GEPs were designed and tailor-made and intervention actions were initiated.

Within CHANGE there are three types of actions: short (or quick), middle and long-term actions. Short-term actions (or quick wins) were implemented in the ‘quick action phase’ to help increase the visibility of the project within institutions and also to raise awareness about gender inequality issues.

The implementation of medium and long-term actions was started in phase 4 (‘Strategic action phase’). These actions were planned and design to change the organizational culture of organisations. Medium-term actions

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are those activities that are initiated and completed during the project's life cycle whereas actions for long-term implementation will begin during the project and will be maintained beyond its duration. However, these two action typologies, given their nature and interrelationship, tend to be analysed simultaneously.

The implementation of short middle and long-term actions to enhance GE in decision-making processes and bodies in the CHANGE implementing partners resulted mainly from the work done under T4.3 - Implementation of short- and middle-term actions to enhance gender equal decision making processes and bodies and T4.4 – Reflection and sustainability through strategic actions to enhance gender equal decision making processes and bodies of WP4. The task leader was UAVR, but all participating RPOs were involved in these tasks, which took place from M9 to M53 and from M36 to M53, respectively.

The first stage of the actions implementing process started by all participating institutions choosing adequate short-term actions to enhance gender-equal decision-making processes and bodies. Short-term actions started to be defined after the feedback from the second knowledge co-production workshop held in Zilina (M7). UAVR team organised a workshop with two aims: first, to share relevant GE knowledge on gender balance in decision-making bodies; second, to identify potential actions, delineate a specific plan for their implementation, recognise the existence of obstacles and ways to overcome them. NTL organised meetings in all partner institutions with the respective CHANGE teams, including their TAs to support the implementation of the defined quick actions. In the third knowledge co-production workshop, which took place in IL (M13) first experiences from the implementation of these quick actions were shared and reflected, and, based on these experiences, needs for further gender training and knowledge were identified. The design of the framework for carrying out the implementation and monitoring of middle- and long-term actions were developed commonly for all partner institutions and started within the fourth knowledge co-production workshop (M19), organised by NIB in SI. The final stage regards strategic long-term actions, which will be finished after the project ends.

Table 6 shows the short, middle and long-term actions defined in each CHANGE implementing partner. These actions, very important for the sustainability of CHANGE, were possible due to the cooperation of the TAs of all institutions and the co-produced GE knowledge of CHANGE. The actions defined by each implementing partner were designed taking into account the context and reality of each institution in order to meet their specific needs.

Table 6 - Actions defined by CHANGE implementing partners

RPO	Short-term actions	Middle-term actions	Long-term actions
NIB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark status overview • Institutional gender training • Informal gatherings • Cooperation with other institutions and RFOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for gender-language and work-life balance • Monitoring indicators for progress monitoring and evaluation • Mentoring and support activities • External events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-sensitive career development plans • Annual gender benchmarking report • Gender balanced decision-making boards and committees • Increase the number of female PIs in research projects • Guidelines for gender-blind promotion and hiring • Guidelines for inclusion of gender in research content • Gender perspective in dissemination and communication

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<p>IFAM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform about the participation of IFAM at the CHANGE project • Contact to other Fraunhofer and local institutes • Training in how to write job advertisements more attractive for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops combining gender issues and technical themes • Integrate gender in the executive training • National Community of Practices • Internal gender diversity project • Global panel • Obligatory one day unconscious bias training on management level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New job models attractive for female employees • Using equality report of other Fraunhofer Institutes for internal improvement for recruitment of women • Sustainable internal gender diversity group with head of human resource department and a participant of the management level • Unconscious bias training for all employees
<p>BBC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEP online questionnaire on Work-family relations among college teachers • Personal interviews with female staff members • Workshops for awareness-raising for BBC academic staff members • Data collection on gender-based perceptions and biases in the field of early childhood education • Data collection on the integration of Ethiopian Israeli women into academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire on the effectiveness of the GEP implementation • Workshops and events for awareness-raising for senior management, staff and students • Analysis and recommendations on work-family relations among college teachers • Integration programme on gender-based perceptions and biases in the field of early childhood education • Data analysis on the integration of Ethiopian Israeli women into academia. Expanding data collection to Arab female researchers. • Intervention actions on institutional barriers for gender equality in academic promotion tracks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire on the effectiveness of the GEP implementation • Workshops and events for awareness-raising for management, staff and students • Conclusions on work-family relations among college teachers • Recommendations on gender-based perceptions and biases in the field of early childhood education • Conclusion on the integration of women of minority groups - Ethiopian and Arab Israeli women - into academia • Conclusions and recommendations on institutional barriers for gender equality in academic promotion tracks • Additional actions ('windows of opportunity' that were exploited as the project progressed): • Submission to the 'Equator Index' program of the Council for Higher Education • Writing a policy opinion about parallel professorship tracks to the Council for Higher Education • Writing a chapter about gender equality in the new institutional strategic 5-year plan – including a recommendation to establish a gender equality and equal opportunity unit. • Participation in the new CoP of Public Colleges' GEOs; co-producing an online survey to colleges' staff members during the COVID pandemic

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<p>UNIZA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark status overview • Creation of a group CHANGE ambassadors • Training seminars for core team and ambassadors; HR professionals; unconscious bias training for staff in managerial positions • Survey related to the working conditions • Competition 'My top female scientist' • Creation of a knowledge basis for staff and management • Utilization of university media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with sister projects • Discussions with successful female scientists • Photo exhibition – “Women at university” (2 exhibition places) • Workshop with RFOs, workshops with CoP of RPOs (national) • Policies review and improvement suggestions • Amendments of the selected university documents towards gender sensitive/neutral language • Gender dimension in teaching • Expanding the offer of employee benefits • “Top Female Scientists at UNIZA”- 2 events in presentations' style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking inclusion in annual report • Adaption of the GEP to the requirements of the Horizon Europe- new actions involved, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in the area of prevention of physical and psychological violence (including the sexual harassment); - establishment of the role ambassador for the equal opportunities performed by one of the UNIZA vice-rectors; - media training and further trainings not planned in the initial CHANGE GEP - establishment of the kindergarten • further initiatives like "Children at university"; recommendations for planning of the meetings, etc.
<p>UAVR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training seminars • Create monitoring groups • Develop brainstorming sessions • Informal initiatives to enhance project visibility • Workshops to exchange knowledge and practices • National Community of Practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop brainstorming sessions • Report on gender composition of the UAVR decision-making bodies • Questionnaire on the motivations of women and men to participate in decision-making bodies. • Stimulate the creation of networks to raise womens' voice and visibility in the institution. • Produce and disseminate relevant knowledge on gender in the institution. • Including gender and diversity in proposals for applications for elected positions • Address gender and diversity in research proposals • Distribution of teaching workload sensitive to parents with young children • Institutional communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the brainstorming sessions • Include gender and diversity subjects on the curricula of 3rd cycle students • Benchmark gender institutional documents • Promote gender balance in public events • Promote gender balance in gender and diversity-related projects

The period between M36-M53 was devoted to the reflection of the implementation processes at all implementing institutions and the development for sustainable institutional change. Results of the reflection processes and lessons learned during the implementation were shared at the national stakeholder workshops as well as during the international final stakeholder workshop, realized in PT from 26th to 27th April 2022, and also in a reflection and final assessment during June 2022.

Exchanged experiences, ideas and recommendations during this final workshop will be presented in section 4.4 and 4.5 of this report and will lead into the development of a policy paper for stakeholders (D4.4), to be prepared at the end of the project. In the next subsection, starting from a joint reflection and the self-assessment of each CHANGE implementing partner, we will try to characterize the institutional environment and the situation in terms of leadership in all implementing institutions.

4.2 CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Based on the joint reflection of the consortium partners, it is possible to better understand how the involvement of the organizations in the CHANGE project and the collaboration with **communities of practice (CoPs)** as well as with the **TAs** promoted positive changes in the institutional environment and organisation`s leadership. The aims of this sub-section are to:

- Clarify how the process of communication and collaboration with decision-making bodies in CHANGE implementing organizations has been going;
- Identify the main strategies that have been followed to promote the involvement of senior managers (in the activities and/or in the project);
- Identify the main results obtained so far and the challenges that remain (also trying to present some of the strategies that have been adopted in order to optimise the results).

In this sub-section, the current situation of each CHANGE implementing partner is characterised to present a holistic view of this issue. Moreover, for each implementing partner both the context and the process towards institutional changes are presented.

NIB (SI)

Senior manager supports and encourages NIB CHANGE team`s participation in national ([Alt+G](#)) and European ([GEinCEE](#)) CoPs as well as in the COST action related to the GE ([CA20137 Gender Voices](#)).

Moreover, NIB CHANGE team members are invited by national and European institutions to share and exchange good practice examples of the implementation of GEPs or, in some cases, verification of its drafts. Senior managers support these work related trips.

Participation in CoPs and exchange of good practises inspired senior managers to prepare documentation and to fulfil requirements needed to receive national certificate “Certificate of Socially Responsible Employer”. NIB NTL is included in the process of acquiring this certificate.

Another important achievement in the communication with senior officers is the re-establishment of institutional body in charge of question related to ethics and equal opportunities. Previously existing institutional body covered only ethical questions. Moreover, one NIB CHANGE team member is a member of this institutional body, while another one is in charge of monitoring the implementation of the GEP.

In conclusion, CHANGE project, cooperation and participation in CoPs and EC requirements to adopt GEPs assisted in the increasing attention to and awareness of the gender related topics and level of knowledge in this field. As well it ensured personal and professional growth of NIB CHANGE team members and all staff members who were included in the gender related activities, reinforcing their abilities and willingness to participate in NIB decision-making bodies.

Communication strategy at NIB did not change from the beginning of the project. Communication was soft, non-aggressive, non-clustering, creative, very flexible and tailored to the individual staff members or groups of them (for example, female staff members were targeted group when NIB CHANGE team made cards for table game). Senior managers were all the time invited to various trainings and meetings organized by NIB CHANGE team, but due to workload and other responsibilities in most cases could not attend them. Moreover, NIB CHANGE team kept senior managers informed about major project achievements and activities.

During the implementation of the project few major challenges were observed:

- Middle managers' negative approach to the participation in gender related initiatives as this kind of participation is not directly related to the NIB's field of research. Nevertheless, after EC obligated all RPOs applying for EU grants to adopt GEPs, middle managers' resistance to gender related initiatives is decreasing.
- Lack of interest in the gender topic. This problem was mitigated by awareness raising activities, for example trainings with "hidden" gender topic (training called "Science Communication" targeted at young female staff members and aimed to teach them to communicate their scientific activities more effectively).
- Covid-19 pandemics and measures to manage it. Pandemic years were challenging as hardly earned attention to gender topic was suddenly lost as all efforts were directed to the pandemic and its challenges. Nevertheless, at the same time pandemic showed the real level of existing gender inequalities (for example, scope of unpaid care and domestic work in households, home schooling and at the same time working from home, increased level of domestic violence, economic insecurity etc.). These real life examples became one more argument supporting position regarding existing gender inequality.

In conclusion, NIB CHANGE team sees CHANGE project, its activities and established national and international connections as a total success.

As the biggest achievements can be named:

- Raised awareness and increased institutional and personal level of knowledge of gender topic.
- Adopted institutional GEP, which sets up real and measurable goals to be achieved. In addition, implementation of GEP will be monitored on an annual basis. GEP will be changed taking into account results of monitoring and changing institutional, national and international environment.
- Stable annual funding for implementation of GEP.
- On the national level NIB became one of the first RPO active in STEM field that adopted a GEP. Participation in national and European CoPs fostered exchange of good practise examples and experience. This led to knowledge co-creation among various institutions.

IFAM (DE)

For IFAM, the involvement in CHANGE project and/or collaboration with CoPs seems to influence senior managers of the institution. In DE, by initiative of CHANGE teams (RWTH and IFAM) a CoP with all the German sister projects participants in H2020 was created. The face-to-face and virtual meetings that took place represented an opportunity of sensitisation of the TAs as well as the management staff. At the same time, it also allowed for more openness for new working models (e.g. home office, shared leadership). Currently, the exchange with other sister projects continues to support the discussion about the current situation and shows possible ways and measures to improve the situation. The CoP will continue to exist after the end of the CHANGE project and will continue to meet about every half year. The organisation of the meetings is passed on in each case, so that everyone hosts the meeting. The CoP will also be expanded by contacting and inviting new sister projects.

In addition to the external CoP, a Diversity Group has been formed at IFAM with support from the head office. It consists of managers from different areas of the IFAM (Head of Human Resources, Deputy Director, Women's Officer and experts). This group explicitly deals with equal opportunities at the IFAM and will continue to promote this topic.

BBC (IL)

At BBC, the main strategy to involve senior management in CHANGE was dissemination and exploitation of the project's results, through newsletters, website update and news reports, and formal and informal meetings of BBC TA (the institutional GEO) in various managerial forums as well as presenting and representing CHANGE in national forums, meetings and events led by national stakeholders such as:

- (1) Israel-Europe Research & Innovation Directorate in the Israel Innovation Authority.
- (2) The Council for the Advancement of Women in Science and Technology in the Ministry of Science.
- (3) The national CoP of GEOs in budgeted colleges.

Further contacts have been established with an Israeli RPO (Migal Institute) which participated in another GE-related H2020 project ([R&I PEERS](#)); and with researchers from the Haifa University, who are conducting a joint international research project on gender equity in academia. These contacts might foster future collaborations to further promote GE in Israeli academia and science.

The abovementioned efforts have led to the following achievements:

On the institutional level - since 2018 we can identify some changes in trends regarding gender awareness in BBC. The atmosphere and discourse revolving gender seem more open. Complex challenges faced by staff members regarding their academic promotion are discussed freely. Staff members talk more frequently about barriers and lack of resources and support they face along their academic career and request the management solutions to mitigate them.

On the national level - a new window of opportunity has opened when a new committee was established in the Council for Higher Education (CHE) to promote women in HEIs. This committee initiated a new program called "[The Equator Index](#)" to incentivize institutions to boost and promote female academic staff members and to enhance gender equity within their organizational cultures and work environments.

BBC applied for this program in 2021 while investing substantial resources in order to comply with the proposal's prerequisites. Specifically, a GEO with a professor rank was appointed in addition to the existing GEO who is a senior lecturer, in accordance with CHE resolution to appoint professors as GEOs. Moreover, both GEOs were remunerated for their positions by reducing teaching hours to enable them to dedicate appropriate time for the job. This is the first time the GEO position in BBC is recognized by actual remuneration since its establishment in 2014.

In 2022 the institutional GEOs were requested to contribute a chapter about gender in the new BBC 5-year strategic plan. In this chapter the GEOs lay foundations and propose a rationale and organizational structure for a new unit for equal opportunities and gender equity, based on results and insights from the GEO's experience since 2014, as well as from the CHANGE project. In case the proposed plan is accepted, included and financed in the new institutional work plan, the equal opportunities and gender equity unit will be established, thus enabling sustainable achievements of long-term actions that were first initiated in the framework of CHANGE.

Additionally, the GEOs consulted the BBC President about the CHE initiative regarding parallel academic tracks – i.e. Professor of Practice and Professor of Creative Arts in parallel to the mainstream of professors who engage in research. For the first time in BBC, an application of promotion for Professor of Practice was submitted to the institutional appointment committee. This is a novelty in the institutional agenda and policy,

which has been mainly research-oriented² ever since the BBC was defined under the supervision of the CHE/PBC (Public Budgeting Committee) instead of the Ministry of Education. In light of this change in trends, promotion of a few lecturers in a professional track (instead of a research track) has been recently discussed as well.

In sum, at BBC CHANGE team enabled many actions to be initiated and implemented by the institutional GEO, especially long-term actions that might lead to the establishment of a new unit of equal opportunities and gender equity. However, it is still somewhat challenging to bring the topic of gender to top priority of the management, considering other more urgent matters. Issues such as gender-based violence, LGBTQ rights, women of minority groups or men in Early Childhood Education are highly prioritized, visible and accepted in the organizational culture. However, other aspects such as academic promotions, women in decision-making bodies, unconscious bias or pay gaps are less visible thus less prioritized in the institutional agenda.

UNIZA (SK)

At UNIZA, the strategy to promote the involvement of senior managers in project actions have stayed the same during the whole project. CHANGERS were/are trying to involve top management into concrete actions with clear objectives. Generally, effort was made to communicate in an appropriate language, to identify the needs properly. In this way GE can be understood as an issue of a practical matter providing benefits to university employees and students.

University management has been since May 2018 sensitized in different formal ways (like trainings, panel discussion, during meetings of the Rector's Advisory Board/College of Rector, etc). However, it was also often approached informally during CHANGE and non-CHANGE events.

Recently, very significant impact has had the new GE requirement of the HE. GE has started to be perceived more serious as it was before. The criterion of the HE has become the “door opener for gender equality”. UNIZA is one of the few universities in SK implementing GEP through the European project (It was the first Slovak STEM university, which started to implement GEP). This provided UNIZA with the knowledge, which could be shared with other institutions. UNIZA organised a series of workshops for RPOs. For more Slovak universities, this series was the only initial source of information on GE. 100% of participants (21 out of 21) stated in the feedback form that they will use the knowledge gained during the workshops in their daily work. Additional aspect is that UNIZA CHANGE team was providing consultations on GE for CVTI SR³. More specifically, feedback was provided on the first draft of its GEP together with the recommendations for GE trainers and identification of the main obstacles towards GE on the national level in the R&D sector. The effect of the workshops and consultations for CVTI SR went in both directions.

On the one hand, UNIZA could, thanks to the CHANGE project, indirectly influence the creation of equality policies in the Slovak academia. University formed its position as a supporter of GE at Slovak universities and in research institutions. On the other hand this fact has been perceived also by UNIZA management and has internally strengthen the position of the CHANGE team. Further on, UNIZA CHANGE team members participated together with the top management representatives in activities of the sister projects (e.g. H2020 project CALIPER).

² In 2020/21 there were 28 Professors in the research track in BBC, 3 Professors of Creative Arts, and no Professors of Practice.

³ CVTI SR is a subsidiary organization (public body) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. It is a national information centre for science, technology, innovation and education and a specialized scientific library of the Slovak Republic.

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The GE criterion of the HE simplifies the future sustainability of the CHANGE project. However, despite the occurred positive signs, the extent of the influence of the criterion will be apparent only after a longer period because cultural change of the institution requires some time.

Further success is that the whole university top management (including the rector, vice-rectors, deans, etc.) was in March 2022 trained on unconscious bias. This training followed the training session organised for managerial staff in November 2019.

UNIZA has for the GE topic dedicated a person from senior management, who has become the *ambassador for the equality of opportunities*. The nominated and approved person is one of the university vice-rectors, who actively and practically supports the CHANGE team with GEP implementation.

UAVR (PT)

UAVR's participation in the CHANGE project was clearly an opportunity to stimulate institutional change by raising awareness on GE, including among senior managers, contributing to the construction of more egalitarian working environments. Both senior and middle managers at UAVR appear to be highly involved and committed with the project, although their perception on the UAVR specific context does not acknowledge the existence of relevant gender inequalities. Taking senior managers involvement and commitments it is relevant to mention the willingness of both the Rector and Vice-rector, to be part of the team as TAs. In this sense, the openness and collaboration of most deans as well as research units' coordinators – who, at an early stage, agreed to grant an interview to the UAVR team as part of the project – should also be highlighted. The main conclusion of these interviews is that gender inequality is not seen by the interviewees as a problem at the university. Despite the openness and collaboration with the interviews process, there is a weak adhesion and mobilisation of senior and especially middle managers to the initiatives developed within the CHANGE project.

UAVR organised and implemented a workshop on unconscious biases with an international expert – Tony McMahon, Director of Diversity & Inclusion, from the Trinity College Dublin. A man, an international expert, was deliberately chosen to avoid the idea that CHANGE is dealing with women's problems to be discussed and solved by them. However, the dominant idea of the university as a gender neutral institution and of the inexistence of problems with gender inequality resulted in a low participation of middle managers, like deans and heads of research units. The high level of women participation in academia, especially as students, but also in the staff, especially when compared with the situation in most EU-27, turns more challenging to raise senior managers' gender awareness. When confronted with data demonstrating the gender imbalance in decision-making positions in UAVR, the interviewees argued that women do not want to perform these roles in the institution. In order to obtain empirical evidence on this hypothesis, UAVR team decided to distribute an online questionnaire asking all staff in UAVR about their experience in participating in these bodies and their motivations to participate (“Questionnaire on the participation in decision-making bodies at the University of Aveiro”).

The low number of responses obtained may be another sign of the currently disinterests on gender topics in the institution. The questionnaire was addressed to teaching and research staff, as well as technical, administrative and management staff of the UAVR. The high number of questionnaires conducted during the period in which the CHANGE questionnaire was disseminated can also help explain the low rate of responses (the questionnaire was disseminated during the Covid-19 pandemic period). The informal initiatives seem to be those that have a higher impact in the institution. UAVR team developed several initiatives to increase gender awareness and called the attention for the need of more balance in decision-making processes and bodies. After developing some brainstorming sessions within the UAVR team to find ways to overcome these

obstacles, several initiatives were developed. The brown bag sessions (informal conversations at lunch or coffee break time) revealed to be relevant forums to discuss women participation in decision-making bodies in an informal way with more openness. Also important were the informal initiatives taken to stimulate the creation of specific networks of women in academia to raise their voices and increase their visibility. Among the networks created it is worth to mention the ‘UA-Woman’ a network of women researchers in STEM that organised formal communications with women researchers in top positions in the career to talk about their experience in academia, the obstacles they found and how they overcome them. Other relevant network is the Association of Brazilian Women in UAVR, which intends to call the attention to the specific problems of Brazilian students in UAVR.

Furthermore, the UAVR team actively participated in European conferences and tried to publish the analysis of the empirical work in national and international journals. Simultaneously, the UAVR team has made several efforts to create a national CoP, establishing several contacts with the coordinators of sister national projects as SUPERA, PLOTINA and SAGE. The efforts undertaken resulted in the creation and formalization of a national CoP with 10 Portuguese RPOs in April 2022, during the final workshop of the CHANGE project at the UAVR.

The balance on the identification and implementation of these initiatives is positive, with the implementation of the CHANGE project and awareness raising on GE issues helping to explain several organisational improvements with impact on senior and middle managers, especially through informal mechanisms and networks. For instance, there is a growing gender awareness in the institution translated into the use of gender-neutral language in some events and documents, as well as attempts to create a balanced presence in terms of both male and female institutional actors in formal public events.

At UAVR, the involvement of key institutional actors, although punctual, is materialised in the activities developed within the project, in the direct participation in some initiatives and in the involvement in the design/planning of some initiatives (e.g. invitation to the workshop on unconscious bias was made by the Rector; the participation in the sounding board). At the same time, the mention to the project and/or gender inequality issues in activities or events not directly related to the CHANGE project seems to be increasing, as well as the institutional involvement in some external initiatives related to GE – which has been given visibility by the participation of members of the rectoral team (e.g. webinars such as Teaching+ Project and/or international webinar ‘Promoting Women in Science’). Furthermore, the increase in gender awareness was also relevant to changes in the gender composition of governance bodies as will be evidenced in the following sections.

4.3 CHANGES IN INSTITUTIONAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND BODIES

In M8 of the project, a collection of institutional gender benchmarking report was developed by the UAVR team, aiming not only to serve as a baseline to define the needed actions but also to evaluate the impact within the project process of CHANGE.

In the first report, national teams collected institutional information on:

1. Governance bodies or decision-making committees – Bodies responsible for overseeing the activities, determining the future direction and monitoring progress against strategic ambitions;
2. Scientific and pedagogic bodies – Bodies responsible for the scientific and pedagogical decisions strategic and operational decisions;

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3. Management bodies – Bodies related to the operational running of the organisation;
4. Advisory bodies – Bodies that provide advice to any of the previous bodies but without authority to take decisions.

Now, more than 40 months after the collection of this information, and considering all the initiatives that have been developed, it is time to revise the first report, update the data and reflect on the impact of the actions developed and/or stimulated within the scope of the CHANGE project. This work, based on a comparative analysis, will allow to acknowledge the positive and less positive changes between 2018 and 2022 and to reflect on the potential actions that can be developed after the project end (promoted by TAs).

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is important to remember that although all CHANGE institutions belong to the Higher Education and Scientific Sector, they are quite different from each other. IFAM and NIB are research-only institutions, and UAVR, UNIZA and BBC are research and teaching institutions. Concerning these last ones, it should be noted that while UAVR and UNIZA are universities, with several different training programs, BBC is a multidisciplinary college focused on the pedagogical training of educators. Consequently, given their different missions, they also have distinct organizational structures with research only institutions present few bodies (IFAM-7 and NIB-8) when compared with the teaching and research institutions (UNIZA-9; UAVR-11; and BBC – 15).

It also should be highlighted that it is not possible to analyse in depth the differences occurred in all the identified bodies since, in some of them, the composition remains the same for four or even six years. However, it is already possible to develop some comparative analysis and to identify and report the most relevant changes occurred since the beginning of the CHANGE project, in 2018 (Table 7).

Table 7 - Gender Composition in the decision-making bodies (2018 and 2022)

Bodies/Institution	Governance bodies		Scientific & pedagogic bodies		Management bodies		Advisory bodies	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
IFAM								
2018	100%	0%	85%	15%	-	-	100%	0%
2022	100%	0%	87%	13%	-	-	92%	8%
BBC								
2018	76%	24%	49%	51%	64%	36%	44%	56%
2022	78%	22%	42%	58%	56%	44%	53%	47%
UAVR								
2018	69%	31%	55%	45%	70%	30%	75%	25%
2022	72%	28%	51%	49%	59%	41%	40%	60%
UNIZA								
2018	77%	23%	86%	14%	93%	7%	-	-
2022	71%	29%	90%	10%	75%	25%	67%	33%
NIB								
2018	62%	38%	20%	80%	19%	81%	29%	71%
2022	50%	50%	70%	30%	15%	85%	27%	73%

In 2018, the majority of decision-making bodies were occupied by men in all RPOs. There were few exceptions when women are more than 50% of decision-making bodies (5). In 2022, despite the changes that have occurred between advances and setbacks, women's representation of over 50% in the decision-making bodies remains an exception (6).

In order to better understand this general picture, we will analyse in more detail the changes that occurred in the identified bodies of each CHANGE implementing partner (governance bodies, scientific & pedagogic bodies, management bodies, and advisory bodies).

4.3.1 Governance bodies

The governance bodies or decision-making committees are those that are responsible, in each institution, for overseeing the activities, determining the future direction and monitoring progress against strategic ambitions. At this level, almost all institutions (the exception is IFAM which has two directors) have a singular or unipersonal body, meaning a body in which the decision is taken by a single person. Universities (UAVR and UNIZA) have a Rector and the college (BBC) has a President. Research institutions (NIB and IFAM) have a Director.

In 2018 the only institution that had a woman in these bodies was BBC. In 2022 two CHANGE implementing partners have female leaders (BBC and NIB) (Table 8). The exceptional situation of BBC results from the fact that this institution is mainly constituted by female members. All the institutions have specific bodies which provide support to this unipersonal body. Universities – UAVR and UNIZA – have the rector and the vice-rectors. The research institutes – IFAM and NIB – have a deputy director. In the case of UAVR and BBC the performance of the leader (Rector and Director) is supervised by a Board of trustees. At almost all these institutions there is also a management body which is responsible for the administrative, asset and financial (and, in some cases, Human resources) management of the institution. This body have different names in each institution (Management Council or Board at UAVR; and University management at UNIZA). At IFAM there are two interrelated bodies with this aim, namely the administrative director and the executive board of materials-division. At UAVR, NIB and UNIZA different bodies have a highly relevant role in adopting and change general acts as the Statute, namely the General Council in the first case, the Board of Governors in the second and the Academic Senate in the third. In all the members are representative of different groups of stakeholders (both internal and external). Adding to this, the General Council, at UAVR also elects the Rector.

The gender distribution in the governance bodies or decision-making committees is also distinct for each institution. However, as can be seen in Table 8, there is a tendency for having a higher presence of men when compared to women in all of them, not only in 2018 but also in 2022.

In 2022 IFAM was the only institution where 100% of the Governance bodies were occupied by men (Table 8). At UNIZA 71% of roles were developed by men and 29% by women. At UAVR the percentage of men was 72% against 28% of women. At BBC, the ratio was 78% of men against 22% of women in these roles. Finally, NIB was the CHANGE implementing partner with a higher gender balance (the ratio was 62.5% for men and 37.5% for women).

When comparing the 2022 with the 2018 data, it can be seen that, in addition to IFAM continuing to have no women in the Governance bodies, a reduction in female representation in this bodies has occurred UAVR (-3.13 p.p.) and at BBC (-1.92 p.p.), which was the institution with the highest number of female staff. In the opposite direction, at UNIZA, female representation in these bodies increased by 5.7 p.p.. At NIB percentage of the female representatives in the institutional governance bodies stayed the same (37.5%). Nevertheless, in

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2022 female staff members are present in all 3 governance bodies (director, deputy director and member of board of governance).

The detailed information about the gender composition of each governance body in 2018 and in 2022 can be found in the table 8, presented below.

Table 8 - Gender Composition in the Governance bodies (2018 and 2022)

	Governance bodies	2018*			2022		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
IFAM	Director	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
	Deputy Director	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
	Administrative Director	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
	Executive Board of the shaping and functional materials-division	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	4	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	4
BBC	President	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
	Board of Trustees	22 (78.6%)	6 (21.4%)	28	28 (80%)	7 (20%)	35
UAVR	Rector	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
	Rectoral Team	8 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	12	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	8
	Board of Trustees	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5
	General Council	12 (63.2%)	7 (36.8%)	19	13 (68.4%)	6 (31.6%)	19
	Management Council/ Board	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5	3 (100%)	0 (00%)	3
UNIZA**	Rector	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
	Academic Senate	31 (72.1%)	12 (27.9%)	43	28 (65.1%)	15 (34.9%)	43
	University management	5 (83.3%)	1 (17.7%)	6	5 (83.3%)	1 (17.7%)	6
	College of Rector	13 (86.7%)	2 (13.3%)	15	13 (81.3%)	3 (18.8%)	16
NIB	Director	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
	Deputy Director	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
	Board of Governors***	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5

*Source: D4.1

** Data updated in June 2022. The overall number of representatives of College of rector has increased from 15 to 16 because of the establishment of new role at UNIZA: “science and research coordinator”, performed by a male.

*** The data is of the board that was in office until 22-06-2022 (the composition of new board should be announced soon).

4.3.2 Scientific and pedagogic bodies

The scientific and pedagogic bodies are the ones responsible for the scientific and pedagogical decisions at the strategic and/or operational level in each institution. The analysis of these bodies – considering all the CHANGE partners – also reveals the existence of similar and distinct bodies, as well as some analogous tendencies concerning its gender composition.

The scientific council is common to UAVR, UNIZA and NIB and its members take decisions concerning the institution`s plan of scientific activities and its scientific policy. With a similar statute UAVR has a pedagogical council responsible for the university`s educational affairs. IFAM and BBC have different bodies at this level which may be related with their own mission. IFAM has only two bodies: the head of department and the

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working group leader, while BBC has five different bodies, all of them with responsibilities at the teaching or research level, namely: Vice President for Academic Affairs, Academic Council, The Institutional Appointments Committee, Academic Council Committees (School Teaching Committees), and Head of Research Authority.

As can be seen in Table 9, UNIZA and IFAM were the institutions where the gender gap was stronger in the scientific and pedagogical bodies both in 2018 and 2022. In the case of UNIZA, in 2018, there were 86% of men in these bodies while in the case of IFAM 85%. Inequality in these bodies increased in 2022, with the percentage of men increasing by 3.95 pp and 1.32 pp, respectively, in each of these institutions.

At BBC and UAVR, institutions that already had a large gender balance in 2018 in these bodies, female representation has increased more. Women currently represent 57.61% and 48.98%, respectively in BBC and UAVR scientific and pedagogical bodies.

Finally, at NIB – where the direction of gender imbalance was the opposite in 2018 with only 20% of men in its scientific body – the situation stayed almost the same in 2022, with men now occupying 30% of the positions in this body.

Table 9 - Gender Composition in the Scientific and Pedagogic bodies (2018 and 2022)

Institution	Scientific & pedagogic bodies	2018*			2022		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
IFAM	Head of department	20 (95.2%)	1 (4.8%)	21	-	-	-
	Working group leader	32 (80%)	8 (20%)	40	-	-	-
	Leading positions (2021)	-	-	-	58 (86.6%)	9 (13.4%)	67
BBC	Vice President for Academic Affairs	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
	Academic Council	12 (54.5%)	10 (45.5%)	22	16 (48.5%)	17 (51.5%)	33
	Institutional Appointments Committee	7 (77.8%)	2 (22.2%)	9	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	8
	Academic Council Committees	23 (39.7%)	35 (60.3%)	58	16 (32.7%)	33 (67.3%)	49
	Head of the Research Authority	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
UAVR	Scientific Council	12 (50%)	12 (50%)	24	13 (54.2%)	11 (45.8%)	24
	Pedagogical Council	15 (60%)	10 (40%)	25	12 (48%)	13 (52%)	25
UNIZA	Scientific Council	25 (86.2%)	4 (13.8%)	29	31 (86.1%)	5 (13.9%)	36
	Governing Board	12 (85.7%)	2 (14.3%)	14	14 (100%)	0 (0%)	14
NIB	Scientific Council	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	10	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	10

*Source: D4.1

4.3.3

Management bodies

When referring to management bodies one intends to consider all the institutional bodies related with the operational running of the organization. The dominant bodies at this level are the Deans (UAVR, BBC and UNIZA) and the directors or coordinators of research units (UAVR, NIB and UNIZA). At UAVR the executive commission is the body which is constituted to support the Deans' role. At this level, it is also relevant to highlight the existence of the Dean of Students, at BBC along with the Board of Directors (Governing Council) and the Director General (CEO). Probably due to its smaller dimension, IFAM has no body in this level.

Concerning the gender composition of these bodies (Table 10), it was verified that, in 2018, two institutions have a stronger gender imbalance – although in opposite directions. At UNIZA 93% of these bodies were occupied by men while at NIB 80% were occupied by women. At UAVR and BBC the gender imbalance also existed but was less expressive: at UAVR men accounted for 70% and at BBC 64.3%. In 2022 it can be observed that the gender imbalance in these bodies has reduced in almost all the CHANGE implementing partners. Female representation increased by 8.73 % at the BBC, 11.36 % at UAVR and 17.86 % at UNIZA. At NIB, the percentage of women in these bodies also increased by 3.66 % and they now represent approximately 85% of all the staff members in these bodies.

Table 10 - Gender Composition in the Management bodies (2018 and 2022)

Institution	Management bodies	2018*			2022		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
IFAM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BBC	Board of Directors (Governing Council)	6 (66.7%)	3 (33.3%)	9	7 (58.3%)	5 (41.7%)	12
	Director General (CEO)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
	Deans, Head of Schools	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	3	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	4
	Dean of Students	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
UAVR	Deans	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	20	15 (75%)	5 (25%)	20
	Executive Commission	50 (64.1%)	28 (35.9%)	78	42 (48.8%)	44 (51.2%)	86
	Coordinators of Research Units	13 (68.4%)	6 (31.6%)	19	17 (85%)	3 (15%)	20
UNIZA	Faculty Deans	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)	7	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	7
	Directors/ Coordinators of Scientific & Research Units	7 (100%)	0 (0%)	7	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5
NIB	Heads of Research Sector	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	4
	Joint Services	4 (23.5%)	13 (76.5%)	17	4 (23.5%)	13 (76.5%)	17

*Source: D4.1

4.3.4

Advisory bodies

The advisory boards correspond to those that provide advices to any of the previous bodies but without authority to take decisions. The dominant body at this level is the council of ethics, present at UAVR, BBC and NIB. A body related with disciplinary commission is also present at UAVR and UNIZA. A similar presence are the Trade unions (NIB and BBC). There is a significant number of other bodies that exist only in a specific institution (like Student Ombudsman at UAVR; auditing body and The Gender Equality Officer, at BBC; and, the Board of Trustees at IFAM).

Analysis of the gender composition of advisory bodies reveals relevant differences between institutions and major improvements between 2018 and 2022. At IFAM, women currently represent 8.33% of the members in these bodies (in 2018 there were only men) and at UAVR they represent 60% (an increase of 35 p.p. from 2018). The presence of women in these bodies in 2022 is less significant at the BBC – in this case there has been an 8.14 p.p. reduction in the percentage of women compared to 2018. At UNIZA, women constitute 33.33% of all members of the advisory bodies and in NIB 70.5% (about 0.5 p.p. less than in 2018).

Table 11 - Gender Composition in the Advisory bodies (2018 and 2022)

Institution	Advisory bodies	2018			2022		
		Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
IFAM	Board of trustees	11 (100%)	0 (0%)	11	11 (92%)	1 (8%)	12
BBC	Auditing Body	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1
	The Institution Committee of Ethics in Research	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)	7	3 (42.9%)**	4 (57.1%)**	7**
	The Gender Equality Officer	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1	0 (0%)	2 (100%)****	2
	Academic Staff and Trade Unions***	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6 (66.7%)	3 (33.3%)	9
UAVR	Council of Ethics	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	12	5 (41.7%)	7 (58.3%)	12
	Disciplinary Commission	5 (71.4%)	2 (28.6%)	7	3 (42.86%)	4 (57.14%)	7
	Student Ombudsman	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	1
UNIZA	Disciplinary Commission	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4 (66.7%)	2 (33.3%)	6
NIB	Commission on ethics and equal opportunities	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5	1 (16.7%)	5 (83.8%)	6
	Trade Unions	18 (28.1%)	46 (71.9%)	64	22 (30.6%)	50(69.4%)	72

* Source: D4.1

**Update 2020

*** There are 3 trade unions of academic staff: 1) Senior staff union – new from 2022; 2) Junior staff union; 3) Teachers' union. The numbers indicated are total sums of all three unions.

****1 Professor; 1 Senior lecturer

To better understand the changes that occurred in CHANGE implementing partners on a more qualitative level, each team through a self-assessment identified the **main positive and/or negative changes in institutional decision-making processes or/and composition of institutional decision-making bodies since the beginning of the project.**

The **IFAM** team highlights that in 2021 the target quota relating to the participation of women in scientific positions were scaled down to the institutes. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft as a total has committed itself to various research policy goals towards the German federal and state governments, including the improvement of equal opportunities. In order to achieve this, an individual institute recruitment quota has been determined, which each institute is expected to achieve. This was included as one of many quality objectives in the 2022 audit plan. In this context, an accompanying offer for the institute-specific promotion of equal opportunities was launched.

For **UAVR** team one of the main changes since the beginning of the CHANGE project has been the increased gender awareness that has generally occurred in the institution. The attempt to comply with the legislation and the institutional concern to promote gender balance in nomination positions were also some of the positive changes registered. The increase in female representation in management positions at UAVR shows that the strategy followed under the CHANGE project has potential to be successful. It should be noted, however, that many challenges remain at UAVR and, for example, some staff members are still reluctant to get involved in GE issues, maybe due to “fear of feminism” or the fact that these topics are sometimes perceived as less popular.

According to the **BBC** team, the percentage of women in decision-making bodies in BBC remains relatively high, due to the high percentage of women in the academic staff. The President is a woman, 3 out of 4⁴ Deans of Faculties are women, and generally speaking women are well represented especially in scientific, pedagogic, and advisory bodies. In the past 4 years there have been some major appointments of women in senior positions such as: Chair of the Institutional Appointment Committee, Head of the Arab Institute, Dean of a new faculty (a new position) and Vice Director of academic planning and development (a new position). Women’s representation in government bodies, especially those with higher political impact is still under 50%, although there has been an increase from 2018 to 2022 in women’s representation in two of these bodies and a slight decrease in one of them, as indicated in brackets.– i.e. Board of Trustees (2018: 21%, 2022: 20%), Board of Directors (2018: 33%, 2022: 41.7%) and the Institutional Appointment Committee (2018: 22.2%, 2022: 37.5%). It should be noted that members of the board of trustees and board of directors are not BBC academic staff, but external nominees (not necessarily from the academia). Although there is a majority of women in BBC they are less academically promoted, perform more ‘transparent jobs’ (that is, administrative-academic positions that are less acknowledged for academic promotion) and are more likely to be employed in precarious conditions. From the beginning of the CHANGE project BBC team can identify positive trends, especially in the open discourse and organizational culture regarding women’s promotion, academic assessment, and career tracks. However, according to them, much work still needs to be done in terms of gender unconscious bias, pay gaps and the acknowledgment of teaching, professional practice and other academic activities as equivalent and valuable to research.

UNIZA team reported the progress made in governance bodies. The numbers of female representatives in all the bodies (academic senate, university management and in the college of rector), except of the rector role, have increased. The most significant increase has been recognised in academic senate (7%). University senior management (including rector, vice-rectors, deans, etc.) has been trained during one of the meetings of the college of rector/Rector's Advisory Board. The activity was performed according to the UNIZA GEP. The reason why the training was incorporated to the regular meeting was the time availability of the senior management representatives. The fact that the training has been as such realised can be marked as a success.

⁴ A new faculty of Counselling, Therapy and Educational Support has been recently established in BBC, adding to the existing 3 faculties of Education, Society and Culture, and the Arts.

The university has an ambassador for equality of opportunities within the top management, which means that the GE has its deputy in UNIZA decision-making processes. And the CHANGERS have got a person to speak to. GE is a topic present “on the table”, to be dealt with. Though, it will probably take more time until it is assimilated as an inherent value among UNIZA employees.

Finally, the NIB team stated that the CHANGE project was some kind of an “eye-opener” since a majority of the staff members, especially the ones in the leading/managing positions, are now more cognisant of conscious and unconscious “players” which are hidden behind each decision. Moreover, staff members are less resistant to the formal requirements related to higher inclusion of female staff members in the various institutional bodies or projects. They understand that these requirements are not established in order to make female scientists’ professional path easier, but simply to give them equal opportunities.

4.4 GOOD PRACTICES TO INCREASE GENDER EQUALITY IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND BODIES WITHIN THE CHANGE

4.4.1 Good practices and facilitators of gender equality initiatives

Among the measures implemented under the CHANGE project, there are some particularly relevant to increase GE in decision-making bodies and processes.

At IFAM, the introduction of the internal Diversity Group is perceived as a successful and supportive measure. In this group there is a direct exchange between the different levels and through its composition there is direct access and thus also influence on the level of the head of the institute. In this way, members of the group can present the measures to the management in different ways. In addition, within the group, measures are considered from different and diverse perspectives and thus possible challenges can be minimised.

The increase of gender awareness in UAVR - fostered through the dissemination of the project and the actions implemented under CHANGE - was particularly relevant to increase the representation of women in management bodies. This process was facilitated by the involvement in CHANGE of key institutional actors from the beginning of the project - and which included not only the Rector and the Vice-rector as TAs, but also the monitoring team (the Sounding Board), created in 2018. The combination of formal and informal actions and networking, as well as the involvement of key institutional actors, facilitated the identification of women and contributed to encouraging them to apply for middle management positions.

At BBC, the formal and informal networking was also very relevant for promoting GE in decision-making bodies, as well as the ‘lobbying’ by the TA. The gender issue was made visible through dissemination of newsletters, website update and news reports, GEP activities and gender mainstreaming in as many forums and organizational initiatives as possible and to different groups of stakeholders. This constant discourse enabled the diffusion of the gender perspective to the managers’ awareness, showing them that this cross-cutting issue is relevant to many other issues within the organization. Another strategy was to include the gender perspective in the organizational ‘culture and language’ in consensual areas. For example, BBC is a teachers’ training college, therefore it was quite easy and natural to initiate gender mainstreaming in teaching contents. These initiatives raised awareness and brought the gender issue indirectly to the organizational agenda. Other windows of opportunity or current affairs were also exploited to raise gender awareness, such as the COVID-19 pandemic which intensified the discourse about work-life balance, or other national events which brought about issues of multiculturalism, tolerance etc. The bottom line is to maximize events and ‘windows of opportunity’ thus bringing the gender perspective to the public discourse, showing the relevance of the issue and concrete measures that can be implemented to mitigate gender gaps. The impact of this practice

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is proved by requests or invitations which are addressed at BBC TA, to teach, train or consult people about gender within BBC or in other scientific or academic institutions in IL.

SK does not have any national policies related to the representation of sexes in public or private institutions. Discussions on this topic are missing, as well. The environment at **UNIZA** reflects the attitude of the broader society, i.e. is strictly against quotas, targets or any numerical objectives which could help to balance the representation of genders in the decision-making bodies. The unconscious bias training for the top management as a part of their regular meeting ensured the attendance of all its members and can be considered as a best practice. Additional best practice to be shared is the establishment of the role of the ambassador for equal opportunities. The UNIZA team believes that sensitization towards GE is very important and could contribute to pave the way towards equality in managerial bodies in the institution. On the contrary, strict enforcement of quotas/targets without explaining the reasons and facts behind these actions could be counterproductive and could even lead to the resistance increase.

NIB highlights as good practice initiatives implemented during the CHANGE project the establishment of Commission of ethics and equal opportunities - this institutional body is in charge of implementation of GEP and ensuring equal opportunities to all staff members – and trainings and awareness raising activities. More staff members are aware about gender topic, higher is the institutional level of knowledge related to the gender topic. This approach is likely to have a certain impact on decision-making bodies and processes.

The experience of the CHANGE project also allows us to identify the main factors that facilitated the implementation of the actions and in achieving a greater presence of women in decision-making bodies. The factors most mentioned by the teams of the various CHANGE implementing partners through a self-assessment exercise are:

- Informal mechanisms and talks (BBC, UAVR, UNIZA, NIB).
- Teamwork and networks (IFAM, BBC, UAVR, NIB).
- Commitment and support of TAs (IFAM, UAVR, NIB).
- Legal quota (IFAM).
- The way actors are chosen to decision-making bodies (e.g. nomination vs. election) (BBC). Nomination processes tend to be more advantageous to women than the election. However, while it is acknowledged that the gender balance decreases with the increasing importance and power of the decision-making body, it is not accurate to say that there is a direct relationship between the way actors are chosen to these bodies and their gender balance (Diogo, Carvalho & Breda, 2020).
- Strong female candidates (UNIZA).
- Demand for implementation of GEPs for any potential HE applicants (NIB).
- Positive affect and mindfulness (NIB).

In the context of this issue, the **BBC** team noted that in average, women's representation is quite stable in the institution. Besides that the changes that have occurred at BBC are not necessarily the direct consequence of only the CHANGE project, but might result of several reasons, circumstances or efforts beyond the scope of CHANGE. Anyway, it is assumed that the good practices that were implemented within CHANGE in BBC mainly informal mechanisms and talks, teamwork and networks, were the main factors for what we perceive as a success, meaning raising awareness and bringing the gender issue into the organizational agenda. The BBC team hopes that these efforts contributed also to the nomination of women in key positions and to the fact that parallel promotion tracks are being discussed now more openly as a legitimate alternative to the research track.

For **UNIZA**, the most important factor were strong female candidates for the positions. The pool has been created naturally. Important role for sure played informal mechanisms and talks. The candidates had to be acceptable for the majority of colleagues with voting/nomination rights. UNIZA team believes that CHANGE contributed by its highlighting of research work performed by female researchers, and by bringing up the topic of gender balance in academic environment to the organizational discourse.

The effects of GEP requirement of HE on decision-making bodies are not visible yet. However, the fact that it is a mandatory requirement in HE a very good starting point which all representatives of the UNIZA top management are aware of.

In regard to the commitment and support of TAs, It is important to mention that **NIB**'s TAs were changed during the implementation of the project due to lack of engagement of TAs. NIB NTL became TA and only then the TA role was fulfilled.

4.4.2 Future actions to be implemented

To enhance GE in decision-making processes and bodies, some measures will be implemented by CHANGE implementing partners in the framework of the GEPs in the next 5 years.

At **IFAM** the proportion of women in the recruitment of scientific staff will target a percentage of women scientists of at least 34%. A new strategic plan is currently being drawn up at IFAM in which GE plays an important role. Employees have the opportunity to participate. However, the process is still in its early stages and therefore no precise information on measures can be given yet. Furthermore, through the initiative of the Diversity Group, a compulsory workshop on the topic of unconscious bias will take place for all management staff at IFAM.

The first **UAVR** GEP, published and formally presented in April 2022, during the final international CHANGE workshop at the University of Aveiro, foresees 6 actions related to *balanced careers and decision-making processes and bodies* (subject 3):

- Action 1: Gender balance in the recruitment, assessment and selection committees;
- Action 2: Counselling and individual accompaniment in the creation of career plans;
- Action 3: Creating mentoring networks;
- Action 4: Updating reports/ analysis of the composition of decision-making bodies in terms of gender;
- Action 5: Including the theme of gender inequality and diversity in the training given to members of administrative and management positions with decision-making capacity;
- Action 6: Re-evaluating the factors that inhibit women from competing for management positions.

These six actions ensure the continuity of the work developed under the CHANGE project. Their implementation at UAVR will occur until 2025.

At **BBC**, the new GEP implementation in the next 5 years depends on budget allocated either from the 'Equator Index' program (in case BBC's application to the CHE is accepted) or from internal BBC budget. Furthermore, CHANGE TA, will terminate her position as GEO (performed since 2014) at the end of this academic year (2022), and will be replaced by a new GEO. The new 5-year plan might be updated or modified according to these circumstances. Nevertheless, the BBC team hopes that the CHANGE long term actions and policy recommendations that founded the 'Equator Index' proposal draft will formulate the new 5-year plan of the new GEO, and that more equitable and gender-balanced organizational processes will continue. Establishing

a new equal opportunity and gender unit will be critical to ensure that sufficient resources are available to maintain intervention actions and long-term processes within the organization.

In the next years, **UNIZA** will continue to offer trainings related to the GE. The topic is very complex and can be handled from various perspectives. Therefore, the aim is to present a new GE perspective in every training. Top management is going to be informed about the GE indicators thanks to the ambassador for equal opportunities and is going to be involved in concrete actions according to the GEP. Efforts will be undertaken to further highlight the importance of gender balance in decision-making bodies during informal discussions and an informal recommendation to search proactively/nominate the female staff members for the leading roles/management positions. The current plan has been designed till 2025, actions for next period will be planned in its last year.

Finally, **NIB** aims to reach equal distribution of male and female members in all decision-making bodies in the next five years. As well, NIB plans to introduce some innovations in to the recruitment process (like blind hiring) and career development (individual career plans). It is believed that updated recruitment and career development processes will allow to hire more women and that female staff members will be able to take higher positions.

4.5 BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES

Throughout this subsection, the main experienced barriers of implemented actions that prevent a higher presence of women in decision-making bodies in each CHANGE implementing partner institution are described. In a very general way, it also intends to identify the main barriers expected in this domain in the future.

4.5.1 Main barriers experienced by CHANGE implementing partners

The barriers/obstacles experienced in the implementation of the actions and in promoting the presence of women in decision-making bodies are multiple and diverse.

According to the **BBC** team, the main barrier to women in decision-making bodies stems from the fundamentals of the academic system – meaning meritocracy combined with unconscious biases, work overloads and imbalanced requirements which cause women to ‘drop out’ or face a ‘glass ceiling’ along their career track. Since they are less promoted, they consequently reach less positions in decision-making bodies, thus are less able to assist other women to progress in the system thus the vicious cycle persists.

BBC is an academic college of education which is characterized by a high share of women in the staff alongside gender imbalances in various aspects, in particular women representation in higher academic ranks or top decision-making bodies. Based on an institutional benchmarking and additional data, the BBC team concludes that the identified gender gaps result in large from the fact that the academic promotion in BBC is mainly dependent on ‘research productivity’ despite its being a teaching-oriented institution. In the framework of CHANGE it has been found that women in BBC face conflictual situations, trying to balance their multiple roles and intersecting identities with promotion requirements, which are neither fully transparent nor equally supported in terms of research funding, reduced hours of teaching to enable research, occupational security, instrumental or well-being support. Additionally, staff members are less acknowledged or rewarded for their other substantial academic contributions as teachers, educators, creators, and professional experts.

To BBC team, one of the solutions to these challenges should be alternative and equivalent career tracks to all staff members, men and women, with their unique and multiple identities, talents, assets and contributions. Such alternative tracks would confirm the valuable contribution of all activities to science and academia, including teaching, clinical practice, arts or other applied sciences, without jeopardizing the ethos of meritocracy and academic excellence. Although ‘parallel’ tracks of academic promotion exist as for Professors of Creative Arts and Professors of Practice, they are still regarded exceptional and marginal compared to research-based professorship in Israeli academia. Thus, in addition to applying intervention methods to empower women researchers on the one hand and to neutralise gender unconscious biases in HEIs on the other hand, it is offered to challenge the science and research meritocratic paradigm as well. Such critical thinking might enable multiple academic tracks thus fostering diverse and gender-balanced academic environments for all. It should be noted, however, that this recommendation transcends the institutional level of BBC, since academic requirements and standards are determined on a national and even international level. Therefore, an effective change is possible only if institutional processes will be synchronized with similar national and international processes.

UNIZA team reports problems of a similar nature. The main problem at the institution remains the strong belief in meritocracy and the subsequent belief that numerical objectives for the representation of females in decision-making bodies would even harm their reputation as experts and professionals. As explained by one of the respondents from the top management during the CHANGE interviews, promoting a woman to the professor role in an environment of quotas, would shed a bad light on her skills and ability. Even in the case she would be very capable and the best from all the candidates. To illustrate the belief in meritocracy, the UNIZA team provided a quote from a 2018 interview with a manager (respondent nr. 6) of one university unit: *“...if there were candidates for one position and there were both - a man and a woman, within us [in his organizational unit] I could 100% guarantee that it would not be the sex which would determine but the knowledge and abilities.”*

Another problem is the work overload of the staff in managerial positions. Therefore, the GE is not considered as a priority. In combination with the lack of knowledge or misconceptions on the topic, a strong barrier is in the place.

The resistance resulting from the misunderstanding of GE has been observed on the side of women, as well. One female professor was claiming during one of the CHANGE events that she has never fought against males, on the contrary, she has cooperated with them and they have helped her to progress. UNIZA CHANGE team used this opportunity (as many others) explaining that GE is not about fighting against males.

Specific category are the barriers that women sometimes impose on themselves. UNIZA CHANGE team has not monitored the overload of university employees with private duties. Therefore, we are able to make only assumptions and support the employees with the work-life balance measures. E.g. from the interviews: *“I think that women are very good as pedagogues, but sometimes in research..., maybe also because they don't have that much time when they have families, they can't keep up because they don't have time.”* [Male respondent nr. 6 from the management, year 2018]. When further thinking about the possible solutions, he concluded that kindergarten in the premises of UNIZA could help.

At the **UAVR**, despite the openness and collaboration in the interviews and the increase of women in decision-making positions (as Deans), there is a weak adhesion and mobilisation of senior and especially middle academic-managers to the initiatives developed within the CHANGE project (e.g. workshop on unconscious biases; a low number of respondents to the questionnaire about the participation in decision-making bodies at the UAVR to the teaching and research staff, as well as technical, administrative and management staff of the UAVR). It should be mentioned, however, that the lack or few responses to the questionnaire might be attributed to the fact that, by the time the questionnaire was distributed, there were several online

questionnaires on the same subject and people might have felt overloaded). This situation leads to the persistence of the idea that gender inequality is not a problem or a reality in the institution and makes it more difficult to raise top and middle management (and others') institutional actors' awareness in this domain.

Associated with the idea of gender neutrality there is also a strong presence of the meritocracy values as the main organiser of the institution's activities. Adding to this, the relatively high number of women in academia, when compared with other EU-27, establish as dominant that everything is dependent on women's willingness "if they really want and strive for that, they will get it" is an idea very present in interviewees discourses. As these discourses persist, there is also the discourse, verbalised by women that have reached decision-making positions, that the UAVR is gender-neutral and a meritocratic institution.

Similarly to what the BBC team described, also at the UAVR there is an unbalanced relationship between the attention attributed to teaching and research, with an overemphasis on research as the most important criteria to the promotion and/or advancement in the career. This points to the need for more research and analysis related to the gender composition and socio-demographic characteristics to those non-tenure staff, who are mostly engaged in teaching and not research and are affected by insecurity and precarious working conditions, making it more difficult to access and become involved in decision-making bodies.

Until now UAVR makes a very positive analyses of the implementation of CHANGE project at UAVR but the team is reflecting on ways to overcome resistance of 'gender measures', analysing the possibility to have a broader perspective including diversity as the main variable to be targeted. In the same line, the reflection and implementation of the GEP initiatives are starting to be made with a mainstreaming focus, meaning that promoting equality (with a special focus in gender) should be a dominant concern and a cross-cutting issue, incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages in UARV.

Despite the singularity of each implementing institution, it is possible to identify **the main common barriers** experienced in the framework of the CHANGE project:

- ✓ Strong belief in meritocracy in academic institutions (IFAM; BBC; UAVR; UNIZA).
- ✓ Overload of work for academic and research staff (BBC - especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and at numerous events of security conflicts in the country; UAVR; UNIZA; NIB).
- ✓ Unconscious biases/ stereotypes about GE (IFAM; UAVR; UNIZA; NIB).
- ✓ Lack of gender awareness/ /lack of knowledge about GE (IFAM; UAVR; UNIZA; NIB).

There are, however, other relevant barriers mentioned by the CHANGE teams such as:

- ✓ Changes of the governance bodies (national/institutional) and their leaders/composition (BBC, NIB) (at BBC, for instance, during the years 2018-2022 there have been 4 times elections to Israeli parliament, and a 5th one is planned in the end of October 2022).
- ✓ Promotion criteria to senior positions (e.g. the emphasis on scientific publications) (BBC, NIB).
- ✓ Contractual terms of employment and job insecurity (non-tenured, part-time contracts, ...) (BBC, UAVR).
- ✓ Barriers that women sometimes impose on themselves (family responsibilities, work overload,...) (UNIZA, NIB).
- ✓ Covid-19 pandemic and national and international restrictions established in order to stop spreading of the virus (IFAM, NIB).
- ✓ Lack of supportive mentoring (BBC).

4.5.2 Main expected barriers that may prevent a higher presence of women in decision-making bodies in the future

Concerning the barriers that may prevent a higher presence of women in decision-making bodies in the future, **IFAM** warns that many people are not aware that they are unconsciously discriminating women and there are still relatively few women available (with engineering background) who can move up to higher positions. Furthermore, higher positions are occupied for a long time, and the respective persons only retire, so women can only move up in many years (after the retirement of the former position keeper). These are the main expected barriers with regard to GE in decision-making bodies in the future.

To **UAVR** new resistance (or backlash) may arise from the 'excessive' focus on the GE issue. In this sense, it may be necessary to promote a broader discussion on the democratization of institutions, bringing the intersectional perspective to the centre of the debate. It should also be noted that the resistance experienced throughout the project leads the UAVR team fears that the increase in women's participation in decision-making bodies may not correspond to their effective empowerment. It is necessary to ensure that women effectively take an active role in core areas of activity in the life of the university. Otherwise, there is a risk that the increased women presence in decision-making processes and bodies will be just another (new) reconfiguration of gender inequalities.

According to **BBC**, the main expected barriers are similar to the present ones, meaning meritocracy based on 'research productivity' combined with unconscious biases, work overloads and imbalanced requirements which cause women to 'drop out' or face a 'glass ceiling' along their career track. A major insight that was clarified to the BBC team in the framework of CHANGE is that although research is important, other academic contributions, such as teaching, professional practice and expertise are no less important. Therefore, expanding the perception on academia should include other implementation and professional aspects, which will be more adapted to multiple 'types' of academics, women as well as men, and will contribute to a more diverse, innovative, prosperous, and responsible academia, not on the expense of research, but in addition to it. This idea of parallel promotion tracks (i.e. Professor of Practice and Professor of the Creative Arts) is not new, but one which exists for years, however is not considered 'mainstream' in Israeli academia, consequently has been implemented quite modestly. Promoting and increasing the implementation of parallel academic tracks probably requires profound changes on cultural and social aspects and among all levels of stakeholders: policymakers, decision makers and academics. All should transform into a more open and flexible approach on academia, which combines and balances research and other implementation aspects. This paradigmatic change should be implemented at all systemic levels – institutional, national, and beyond.

UNIZA notes that according to the saying, where is a will, there is a way, the main problem could lie in the missing will. It is connected to the misunderstandings of the GE, fear of losing the meritocracy or even that the support of females in academia could lead to the discrimination of men. The institution functions within broader international environment which tries to enforce the GE policies. On the other hand, on the national level, no signs of political will to change the current status quo are seen. Additionally, GE is abused for political discourses during which is presented to be in contrast to the traditional values which together with additional factors leads to the negative mystification of the term GE. Therefore, the GE is perceived by many as an imported issue which does not cover any real need (we don't discriminate, therefore, the need does not exist). The contradiction between the international and national environment towards GE contributes to the confusion. Under UNIZA assumption, no pressure is expected from the ministry on higher representation of females in the decision-making bodies of universities. Therefore, this issue needs to be tackled by the university itself.

Lack of awareness and knowledge of gender topic was, is and most likely will be one of the main barriers at **NIB**. Gender topic all the time will be seen as "unnecessary" topic in the modern European countries and in

the institutions working in STEM fields. This opinion formed as it is believed that women in EU countries have all the rights and freedoms they are entitled to. In this scenario, even after CHANGE project will be over, NIB CHANGE team will continue organizing formal and informal awareness raising activities.

5 CONCLUSION

With the intent to improve gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies, the WP4 had as main objectives: to identify at least three major decisions making processes and bodies and quantify the respective gender relations; to plan short- middle- and long-term actions to enhance gender equal decision making processes and bodies; to implement short-term ('quick') actions to enhance gender equality in the defined decision making processes and/or bodies in each partner institution; and to implement strategic middle, and long term actions to overcome gender imbalances in decision making processes and bodies in each partner institution

All the objectives were accomplish but, after 4 years of the CHANGE project women are still under-represented in most of the decision-making bodies in most of the CHANGE partners. This under-representation is also still common to other Higher Education systems and institutions.

Data from the *She Figures* (2021) report show that women remain under-represented in academic and administrative leadership and decision-making positions in higher education and research institutions across Europe. According to the EC (COM 2021), only 14 % of rectors in the 46 countries of the European University Association (EUA) members were women in 2019 (EUA 2019). In 2022, this proportion raised up to 18,28%; nevertheless, despite this increase, women are still strongly outnumbered by men as university leaders, accounting for less than a fifth in all EUA member universities in 2022 (EUA 2022). Reasons to explain these numbers underpin cultural and social norms, e.g. the fact that leadership is still mostly associated with a men's activity, that meritocracy and excellence are values intrinsic to higher education and research institutions, unconscious biases; and barriers that prevent a higher presence of women in decision-making bodies, e.g. work overloads and imbalanced requirements which cause women to 'drop out' or face a 'glass ceiling' along their career track, lack of awareness and knowledge on gender issues and even being reluctant (powerful actors) of becoming involved in such matters, as female colleagues' empowerment, etc. As demonstrated in this report, gender topics are sometimes perceived as an "unnecessary". Thus, although women have succeeded in entering the academic career they are still excluded from the academic elite, meaning from formal outstanding academic positions (Rogg 2003). In this respect, GEPs have a potential impact in improving gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions.

CHANGE implementing partners have drawn on both formal and informal activities to target this problem and increase awareness for the needs and benefits of GE in the institutions. These actions took both formal and informal character, which went through the elaboration of benchmarking gender institutional documents and showing them to institutional key stakeholders, TAs, brown bag sessions, informal conversations and meetings at lunch, coffee breaks or after work and workshops to make GE more visible, the creation of networks and monitoring groups to arise women's' voice and visibility in the institution, among others. It is undeniable that these actions had a positive impact. In fact, these actions enhanced a higher gender balance with respect to middle-management positions, which to a great extent resulted mainly from informal 'strategies' or mechanisms, driven by an increased awareness on gender (in)equality. These informal 'strategies' have the power to strengthen, weaken or even guide institutional re/configurations that aim to promote women's access to decision-making positions, even if monitoring and continuity of gender awareness measures are needed after the project is "concluded". In fact the increase in women's participation in decision-making bodies may not

correspond to their effective empowerment, being necessary to ensure that women effectively take an active role in core areas of activity in institutions' life. Otherwise, there is a risk that the increased women presence in decision-making processes and bodies will be just another (new) reconfiguration of gender inequalities.

To improve gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies takes time and long-term actions need to be accomplished and monitored to assure its continuity. Despite the positive impact of the actions taken, there is also evidence of strong institutional resistances. To guarantee that gender balance continues to be an institutional objective, it is important to assure that strategic and sustainable actions keep being designed and implemented.

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