



# Erasmus +



Organizations focusing on supporting and empowering women in the labour market

PROJECT

ERASMUS+ PROJECT "LEARN TO BE!"

# Relevance of gender in employment

- ▶ While considerable progress has been made in relation to women's labour market participation over the past decades, deeply entrenched inequalities persist. They are the result of discriminatory norms and attitudes, the unequal distribution of care responsibilities in the household and the way institutional structures consider and integrate gender. While women's activity rate has increased during the past years, men's activity rate has remained largely stable. The slow tempo of changes in the sharing of unpaid work represents a serious constraint for women's equal access to the labour market and their equal control over economic resources.

# Gender gap

- ▶ Gender gap is the term used to describe the unequal outcomes achieved by women and men on the labour market, as well as women's restricted access to rights and assets worldwide. No country in the world has fully closed the gender gap. The main gender gaps in the labour market concern differences in:
  - ▶ employment rate.
  - ▶ part-time work.
  - ▶ unpaid care and family responsibilities.
  - ▶ access to rights and assets (professions and decision-making positions).
  - ▶ working conditions.
  - ▶ hourly wages (gender pay gap).
  - ▶ the possibilities for economic independence.

# Childcare facilities

- ▶ It is recognised that the lack of promotion of work–life balance policies in general, and the lack of childcare facilities in particular, present a major obstacle to the economic independence of women. ‘Reconciliation policies’ in general and the provision of childcare facilities in particular enable both women and men to achieve economic independence. As stated by the OECD, the greatest pay differences can be observed in countries where there is little provision of childcare facilities for young children.
- ▶ The target that childcare systems should provide 33% coverage for children under 3 years of age was achieved by 10 Member States by 2014, while 90% coverage for children aged between 3 and the compulsory school age was achieved by 9 Member States by 2014.

# Parental and maternity leave

- ▶ The Directive on Parental Leave gives each working parent the right to at least 4 months' leave after the birth or adoption of a child (previously up to 3 months). At least 1 of the 4 months cannot be transferred to the other parent – which means it will be lost if not taken – that gives an incentive for fathers to take the leave. The Directive also provides for better protection against discrimination and a smoother return to work. Member States had until 8 March 2013 to transfer it into national law. The EU Commission is monitoring the compliance of the Member States.
- ▶ Notwithstanding the fact that there has been significant progress in the extension of parental leave in EU Member States, women make up the majority of parental leave recipients.
- ▶ The proportion of all parental leave allocated to employed men compared to the leave allocated to employed women is a key indicator that links the reconciliation of work, private and family life to gender equality.

# Differences for the parental leave

- ▶ The data show a notable variation among countries in fathers' take-up of parental leave. For example, in 2007 in Sweden, there were 77 fathers for every 100 mothers taking parental leave, while in Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany and Slovakia there were fewer than 10 fathers for every 100 mothers in parental leave. Fathers' use of parental leave is particularly low if parental leave is organised along family lines (not as an individual and non-transferable right) and if it is not well paid. However, the ratio of fathers taking paternity leave is higher than those taking parental leave, especially in Finland or France where paternity leave is relatively short and well paid compared to the parental leave benefit. A higher share of parental leave allocated to fathers is likely to ensure a stronger effect on a more gender-equal distribution of care work within families.

# Some program for the empowering the situation of women

- ▶ **EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)**
- ▶ The PROGRESS axis of EaSI helps the EU and its countries to improve policies in three thematic sections:
- ▶ employment, in particular to fight youth unemployment;
- ▶ social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty;
- ▶ working conditions.

# EASY Objectives

- ▶ Develop and disseminate high-quality comparative analytical knowledge.
- ▶ Facilitate effective and inclusive information-sharing, mutual learning and dialogue.
- ▶ Provide financial support to test social and labour market policy innovations.
- ▶ Provide organisations with financial support to increase their capacity to develop, promote and support the implementation of EU instruments and policies.



# Who can participate?

EU countries; EEA countries, in accordance with the EEA Agreement, and EFTA countries; EU candidate countries and potential candidate countries, in line with the framework agreements concluded with them.

- ▶ **The PROGRESS axis of EaSI is open to all public and/or private bodies, actors and institutions**, and in particular:
  - ▶ national, regional and local authorities;
  - ▶ employment services;
  - ▶ specialist bodies provided for under Union law;
  - ▶ the social partners;
  - ▶ non-governmental organizations;
  - ▶ higher education institutions and research institutes;
  - ▶ experts in evaluation and in impact assessment;
  - ▶ national statistical offices; the media.
- ▶ It can support **cooperation with international organizations**, and in particular with the Council of Europe, the OECD, the ILO, with other United Nations bodies and with the World Bank.

# Funding

- ▶ 55% of the total EaSI budget will be allocated to the PROGRESS axis. 20% of this quota will be dedicated to fight youth unemployment, 45% to social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty and 7% to working conditions.
- ▶ From the overall allocation for the Progress axis, a significant share shall be allocated to the promotion of social (policy) innovation as a method for testing and evaluating innovative solutions with a view to upscaling them.

# Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship

- ▶ The Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship (MF/SE) axis supports actions in **two thematic sections**:
- ▶ microcredit and microloans for vulnerable groups and micro-enterprises;
- ▶ social entrepreneurship.

# Objectives

- ▶ Increase access to, and the availability of, microfinance for vulnerable groups who want to set up or develop their business and micro-enterprises.
- ▶ Build up the institutional capacity of microcredit providers.
- ▶ Support the development of social enterprises, in particular by facilitating access to finance.

# Funding

## ▶ **EaSI Guarantee**

- ▶ €96 million is already available for interested microcredit providers and social enterprise through the EaSI Guarantee. It shall enable microcredit providers and social enterprise investors to reach out to entrepreneurs they would not have been able to finance otherwise for risk considerations. The Commission has selected the European Investment Fund as its entrusted entity to implement the EaSI Guarantee.

- ▶ To apply for the EaSI Guarantee (direct or counter-guarantee), reply to a call for expression of interest on the [European Investment Fund website](#).

## ▶ **EaSI Capacity Building**

- ▶ €16 million is available through the EaSI Capacity Building Investments Window. It aims at building up the institutional capacity of selected financial intermediaries that have not yet reached sustainability or are in need of risk capital to sustain their growth and development. It covers equity and, in exceptional cases, loans. The Commission has selected the European Investment Fund as its entrusted entity to implement the EaSI Capacity Building Investments Window.

- ▶ To apply for the EaSI Capacity Building Investments Window, reply to a call for expression of interest on the [European Investment Fund website](#).

# some examples EU support for Lithuanian small and microbusinesses through LCCU credit unions

- ▶ Lithuanian Credit Union LKU Group (LCCU) signs guarantee agreement with European Investment Fund (EIF) under EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)
- ▶ The guarantee will back a portfolio of around 320 new microloans to small businesses and micro-enterprises in Lithuania, for a total of up to €8 million
- ▶ The European Investment Fund and the LCCU have signed a cooperation agreement for a guarantee facility, to launch an €8 million microcredit programme for small businesses in towns and regions in Lithuania. The guarantee is supported under the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), while 11 credit unions, members of the LCCU credit union group, will act as financial intermediaries.
- ▶ As a result, much needed financing will become available to small and micro-enterprises in Lithuania through at least 320 new transactions for a maximum loan amount of €25.000. Credits under this agreement will be provided to businesses with no more than 9 employees and an annual turnover not exceeding €2 million. The loans under this guarantee will have a 0.5% lower interest rate compared to the standard rates, and the possible maturity term will range from 3 to 60 months.

# New ESIF ERDF Guarantee Fund initiative in Greece

- ▶ The new ESIF ERDF Greece Guarantee Fund mandate is the third ESIF mandate signed with the Hellenic Government during the current programming period, following EquiFund and the ESIF EAFRD Greece FoF.
- ▶ It is funded under the Operational Programme ESIF-ERDF “Epanek” and national co-financing resource, for a total amount corresponding to EUR 100 million.
- ▶ The initiative's objective is to provide better access to finance for small businesses who are the final recipients of the programme. This is achieved through loss protection provided by the EIF to financial intermediaries via capped (counter-) guarantees for portfolios of newly originated loans or leases in all business sectors in Greece. Each financing transaction included in the portfolios of our intermediaries will be covered to a guarantee rate of up to 80% and losses capped at up to 25% of the guaranteed part of the portfolio, covering expected loss.
- ▶ The Hellenic Government through its Managing Authority OP has dedicated part of their budgetary resources co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to setting up this new Guarantee Fund. The EIF as manager of the Fund channels these resources towards financial intermediaries selected through the application process described below.
- ▶ The initiative's investment board approved the Call for Expression of Interest to Financial Intermediaries on 2 June 2020, which completed the first phase of the Guarantee Fund's activation, making available EUR 100 million of financing that is expected to create SMEs loan portfolios of up to EUR 465 million.

# Development of skills/ opportunity

## The importance of key competences development

- ▶ The EU economy is constantly evolving. The demand for relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes changes over time. To deal with these changes, people need to be equipped with a set of key competences - including literacy, numeracy and digital competence. Critical thinking, creativity and the ability to work as part of a team are equally important to build sustainable careers and become active citizens.
- ▶ Education and training play a crucial role in enabling young people, in particular, to develop these competences and, thereby, provide the conditions for the best possible start in life.
- ▶ To better identify and manage the acquisition of required knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and prevent the emergence of skills gaps and mismatches, effective communication of the needs of the EU economy to the education and training sector is essential.



# European initiatives in this field

- ❖ The Council has outlined a set of 8 competences that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment in its Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning
- ❖ The New Skills Agenda for Europe highlights 10 actions to make relevant training, skills and support available to EU citizens
- ❖ The Commission's Digital Education Action Plan contains 11 actions to make better use of digital technology for teaching, learning and developing digital competences
- ❖ The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition is a multi-stakeholder partnership that has been tasked with tackling a shortage of ICT skills to help fill the thousands of unfilled vacancies in this field

# European initiatives in this field

- ▶ The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan represents a blueprint for realising Europe's entrepreneurial potential by targeting the removal of existing obstacles and revolutionising the culture of entrepreneurship in the EU
- ▶ ESCO is the multilingual classification of European Skills/Competences, Qualifications, and Occupations. It introduces standardised terminology in 25 European languages and categorises core skills, competences, qualifications and occupations for the EU economy and education and training providers
- ▶ The Skills Panorama regularly monitors the evolving needs of the European economy and skills acquisition at the national and European level. It provides data on skills trends at the national and at the EU-level.

# Entrepreneurship in education

- ▶ Being entrepreneurial is a valuable skill for EU citizens, both for their personal and professional development. Entrepreneurship education plays a key role for Europe's competitiveness and for the continuous growth of Europe's economy.
- ▶ Promoting entrepreneurship in education as a key competence encourages EU citizens to be enterprising and to formulate innovative solutions to societal problems and to design products of added socio-economic value.
- ▶ Entrepreneurship is supported through a number of actions under the Erasmus+ programme, both for those studying, training and participating in strategic partnerships projects abroad. The EU has created a set of guidelines to support the fostering of entrepreneurship in education and training.
- ▶ In addition, a number of tools have been created to support the development of an entrepreneurial mindset among EU citizens, among which HEInnovate for higher education institutions

# EU support to strengthen gender equality in STEM

- ▶ The She Figures 2021 report shows that less than a third of undergraduate students in science and The roadmap towards gender equality in STEM
- ▶ The commitment of education and R&I stakeholders, as well as national authorities in EU Member States and Associated Countries, is needed to strengthen women's participation in STEM. The European Strategy for Universities, adopted by the Commission in January 2022, sets the objective to address the underrepresentation of women in STEM, through a roadmap of activities spanning across education and research policies:
- ▶ engineering in the EU are women (31.3%), and while the proportion of women slightly increases among PhD graduates (38 %), the gender gap widens as seniority levels increase, with women holding only 17.9% of full
- ▶ Professorship positions (Grade A) in Engineering and Technology

# The roadmap towards gender equality in STEM

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- ▶ The European Strategy for Universities, adopted by the Commission in January 2022, sets the objective to address the underrepresentation of women in STEM, through a roadmap of activities spanning across education and research policies:
- ▶ Within the European Education Area (EEA), the EU promotes life-long learning, spanning from early childhood education to adult learning and combining formal, non-formal and informal learning.
- ▶ Equity is a central dimension of the EEA.
- ▶ The Erasmus+ programme offers many opportunities for schools and higher education institutions to gender-inclusive STE(A)M1 education, including through the development and implementation of STE(A)M higher education curricula and projects to promote girls' interest in STEM through interdisciplinary teaching. With the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), the Commission supports initiatives to tackle the gender digital skills gap in education and training (Action 13).

# The main initiatives under this action are:

- ▶ Girls Go Circular project: a free online learning programme, has trained over 26 000 14-19 year old girls in 15 countries across Europe since 2020. The initiative holds the annual Women and Girls in STEM Forum to celebrate its success and the girls at the centre of it.
- ▶ ESTEAM Fests': (Entrepreneurship, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) offer hybrid workshops, where girls and women of all ages come together to improve their digital and entrepreneurial competences. By 2024, 11 ESTEAM Fests will be organised in 19 Member States.

# The European Research Area

- ▶ Gender equality is a priority for the European Research Area since 2012. To foster gender equality in research and innovation (R&I), the European Commission is championing an institutional change approach through the implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) at R&I organisations.
- ▶ GEPs have become an eligibility criterion for all public bodies, higher education institutions and research organisations, applying to Horizon Europe. Through successive Framework Programmes, the Commission has funded so far over 200 research organisations to implement their own GEP.
- ▶ Further efforts to support gender equality and inclusiveness in R&I are developed together with Member States and stakeholders under the ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024 Action 5.

# Several Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe funded projects, aimed at fostering structural change in R&I organisations and bridging the gender gap in STEM, as highlighted in

- ▶ Leading Towards Sustainable Gender Equality Plans in research performing organisations, coordinated by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia in Italy-

Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) offer a powerful tool for institutional change, including tackling the under-representation of women in STEM fields. Through a series of stakeholder workshops, awareness raising events and a final conference, LeTSGEPs is supporting GEPs' design and implementation in six different research-performing organisations across Europe.

GEPs that are not based on budget analysis to correct gender biases in the distribution of resources and that do not provide proper budgets for their implementation are at risk of not being sustainable. LeTSGEPs fosters the use of Gender Budgeting, showing the impact of each programme on gender equality and producing more powerful GEPs.

Scheduled to run until 2024, the project has already published a Gender Equality Training Strategy for research institutions and training materials in seven languages. [www.letsgeps.eu](http://www.letsgeps.eu);



# Caliper

- ▶ The CALIPER project was launched to support greater gender balance in research institutions by increasing the number of women researchers in STEM, enhancing their career prospects and adding a gender dimension to research contents.
- ▶ Nine research institutions across Europe are being supported by the project to develop Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), and to engage their local Research & Innovation Hubs to transfer the gained knowledge beyond academia. Through actions such as the production of videos featuring women role models in STEM fields, CALIPER stimulates dialogue and collaboration between academia, public authorities, professionals and industry players in order to tackle gender inequalities across the research-transfer-to-market pipeline.
- ▶ CALIPER creates strong linkages between the research and innovation ecosystems in the project countries to enhance female researchers' career prospects both at institutional and business level
- ▶ <https://caliper-project.eu/>

# Pilot experiences for improving gender equality in research organisations, coordinated by the University of Salerno in Italy

The R&I PEERS project was launched to create and validate pilot experiences that disrupt a gender-biased approach and unconscious rules that limit the participation and career of women in research and innovation in the Mediterranean Area, in particular in STEM fields.

- The project aimed to build equality by increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in research, and fostering entrepreneurship among women researchers. Success in these goals will increase the pool of European talents and offer an important competitive advantage for strengthening scientific and technological endeavour.
- Over the course of 4 years, the R&I PEERS project worked to improve and implement seven Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in research organisations, reduce the gender gap in decision-making and research-performing activities, and maximise the impact of gender content in research programmes.
- <http://ripeers.eu/>

# Europe's Regional Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, coordinated by Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) in Norway

- ▶ The EQUALS-EU project aims to create smart, sustainable and inclusive innovation ecosystems by building capacity and expanding networks for women and girls in social innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in the information and communications technology (ICT) industry. It plans to incubate at least 20 start-ups led by women and girls through a rigorous education and professional development plan, focused on women's digital rights, transformational leadership and STEM skills.
- ▶ In addition to mapping gender-inclusive innovation ecosystems, the regional partnership of 19 organisations from 15 EU Member States and Associated Countries is curating a worldwide range of events including innovation camps and hackathons, a 6-month incubator programme focused on gender- inclusive entrepreneurship, and a 1-month boot camp for future leaders in gender- inclusive innovation
- ▶ <https://equals-eu.org/>

Thank for your  
attention!!!

