



EUAbout

Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

2025 – 2027

**Within the framework of Horizon Europe,
research and innovation (R&I) programme for 2021-2027**

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This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) has been developed in alignment with the European Commission’s Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (2021)¹ and fulfils the mandatory eligibility requirements for Horizon Europe. It defines EUAbout’s strategy, actions and monitoring measures to promote gender equality, ensure fair treatment and support inclusive working environments.

Foreword

EUAbout is fully dedicated to promoting gender equality and creating a respectful and welcoming working environment for everyone. Our organization acknowledges that diversity is a strength and that fairness, innovation, and institutional performance depend on men and women participating equally. Gender equality is a core value of the European Union¹, a necessary condition for a competitive, innovative and prosperous European economy, which is also a fundamental right.

The EUAbout Gender Equality Plan outlines our long-term commitment to gender equality. It establishes goals, actions and monitoring mechanisms to address inequalities and support equal participation in our organization. Adoption of this GEP ensures compliance with Horizon Europe requirements and reinforces our belief that equality contributes to organisational excellence, innovation, and inclusive research outcomes.

1. Introduction and context

1.1 Definition of a Gender Equality Plan

A Gender Equality Plan is an institutional document that identifies existing gender disparities, defines objectives and actions to address them, and establishes clear mechanisms for monitoring progress. In the European context, gender equality is both a fundamental right and a prerequisite for innovation and societal development. Despite advancements across the EU, persistent gender gaps remain—particularly in leadership roles, pay transparency, care responsibilities and access to professional growth.

This plan has been drafted with reference to EU strategies and directives, including the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 and the Work–Life Balance Directive (2019/1158)², and incorporates the mandatory elements defined in the Horizon Europe eligibility criteria: public availability, formal endorsement, dedicated

¹ https://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/GEPs_in_HE_guidelines.pdf

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32019L1158#PP4Contents>



resources, sex- and gender-disaggregated data collection, training, monitoring and the integration of gender dimensions in research and innovation activities.

1.2 European and National Context for Gender Equality

The EU is a global leader in gender equality, with 14 of the top 20 nations worldwide for gender equality being European union member states³. Thanks to equal treatment laws and efforts to mainstream gender perspective into several policy domains, significant progress has been made in recent decades.

However, development is still slow and no member state has fully achieved gender equality. Recent data from the European institution for Gender Equality (EIGE)⁴ shows such action is urgent. Throughout the Union, gender unequal distribution of care responsibilities, gender pay gaps, and underrepresentation in leadership roles are still pervasive. In addition to encouraging women to speak up about their experience and seek justice, the #MeToo movement has brought attention to the alarming extent of abuse and sexism that women face in society. By implementing a thorough GEP, EUAbout seeks to contribute to removing these barriers and make sure that employees are able to thrive on an equal basis within the organization.

1.3 Scope and Duration

The GEP applies to all EUAbout staff, management, and external project partners. It covers the period from 2025 to 2027. The baseline year for assessment is 2024, the most recent complete year preceding this plan's adoption. A mid-term review will take place in 2026 and a final evaluation in 2027.

1.4 Methodology

The plan is based on internal data collection, consultation with staff, and analysis of existing organisational practices. It combines two complementary approaches: the mainstreaming of gender considerations across policies and procedures, and targeted actions to address specific inequalities identified in the baseline analysis.

2 Baseline Assessment: Situation in 2024

2.1 Workforce composition – Baseline 2024

Table 1: composition of EUAbout labour force

³ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en



Role level	Women	Men
Director/leadership	0	1
Senior	0	2
Mid-level	1	0
Junior	1	0
Total	2	3

In 2024, EUAbout employed 5 staff members: 2 women and 3 men. Women occupied mid-level and junior positions, while men held senior roles and the directorship. **Working conditions** were characterised by *flexibility in working hours* and *remote arrangements*, although no formal written policy defined these practices. Two men worked part-time while all other employees were full-time. No staff member took maternity, paternity or parental leave during that year.

Salary structures were informal and not publicly available.

Recruitment was conducted through public calls and online channels (mainly LinkedIn), led by the HR Officer with support from relevant staff. No written recruitment guidelines existed at the time.

Training was provided through internal mentoring rather than formal training programs. There was no code of conduct or anti-harassment policy in place. To monitor the quality of monitoring, training, and mentoring activities, surveys were sent to interns to gather feedback to help the team understand strengths and areas for improvement. This baseline highlights strengths—such as flexibility and informal support—and areas requiring improvement, particularly formal policy structures, pay transparency, harassment prevention and recruitment procedures.

3 Objectives and Strategic Priorities

EUAbout's **strategic objectives** for the period 2025–2027 focus on eliminating structural barriers to equality and embedding gender mainstreaming across internal policies and project activities. The first priority is to improve gender balance across the organisation, particularly in leadership and decision-making roles. Although the directorship is currently male, EUAbout is committed to avoiding single-gender leadership structures by creating advisory or management functions that enable women's participation as the organisation grows. A second strategic objective is to enhance fairness and transparency in recruitment, career progression and remuneration. EUAbout intends to increase the number of women recruited by 50% during the plan period and ensure that evaluation criteria and selection processes are transparent, neutral and accessible. Consistent with EU pay transparency regulations, the organisation will conduct a pay audit and eliminate unjustified wage disparities by 2027. Another priority is to promote **work-life balance** as



a structural right rather than a privilege. Flexible and remote working practices, which already exist informally, will be formalised to guarantee equal access and to support a more equal distribution of unpaid care duties in line with Directive 2019/1158. Encouraging men's participation in parental leave will be an important part of this cultural shift.

The strategic framework also recognises gender-based violence and harassment as critical organisational risks. EUAbout will adopt a **zero-tolerance approach** and establish safeguards that protect staff and build a **respectful working environment**.

Finally, gender equality will be embedded in EUAbout's project-related activities. Integrating sex and gender analysis into research design, dissemination and impact pathways will improve project quality and align with Horizon Europe requirements.

Together, these priorities outline a long-term ambition: to transform EUAbout into a workplace where equal opportunities, transparency and respect are standard practice rather than targeted initiatives.

4 Action Plan

The Action Plan operationalises these priorities and defines how progress will be monitored over time. (i) **Recruitment procedures** will be revised to ensure transparency and the use of gender-neutral language, and selection committee members will receive training on unconscious bias. The success of these actions will be monitored through the adoption of written procedures and records of committee training.

(ii) **Formalising flexible and remote working** arrangements by 2026 will be accompanied by tracking the number of employees who benefit from these options and the balance of uptake across genders. Encouraging men to take parental leave will be monitored through participation rates and internal surveys on perceived access and support.

The planned pay audit will be followed by corrective measures and transparent internal communication. Indicators in this area will include completion of the audit, the percentage of unjustified disparities addressed and internal awareness of pay transparency mechanisms.

The (iii) **anti-harassment framework** will include a confidential reporting channel, response procedures and training. Progress will be evaluated through the creation and use of the reporting mechanism, the adoption of a written policy and staff participation in mandatory training sessions.



(iv) **Training and awareness-raising measures** extend beyond harassment. At least 50% of staff will complete gender-equality training by 2026, with full participation by 2027. Records of attendance and periodic knowledge assessments will help measure effectiveness.

In the (V) **research and innovation domain**, teams will incorporate sex and gender dimensions into relevant methodologies and outputs. Indicators will include the proportion of project proposals containing gender analysis and the use of inclusive and gender-neutral language in dissemination materials.

By linking each action to a clear indicator, EUAbout will be able to track progress annually, conduct a meaningful mid-term review in 2026 and evaluate overall impact in 2027.

5 Monitoring and Indicators

Progress will be evaluated annually through data collection and measurable indicators.

Table 2: Monitoring and Indicators (2025-2027)

Priority Area	Indicator	Baseline (2024)	Target	Measurement Method	Frequency	Responsible Body
Recruitment	Share of women recruited	40% total staff	+50% women hired 2025–2027	HR recruitment records	Annual	HR Officer
Recruitment	Existence of written recruitment procedures	None	Procedures adopted by 2026	Policy review	Mid-term 2026	HR Officer
Pay Transparency	Pay audit conducted	None	Completed by 2026	Internal audit	2026	Director & HR



Pay Transparency	Unjustified wage gap	Unknown	Eliminated by 2027	Salary comparison audit	Final evaluation	HR & Director
Work-Life Balance	Formal remote-working policy adopted	Informal practice	Policy in place by 2026	Policy publication	Mid-term 2026	Equality Committee
Work-Life Balance	Uptake of flexible working arrangements	Informal / not tracked	Balanced uptake across genders	HR monitoring	Annual	HR
Parental Leave	Uptake of parental leave by men	0 in 2024	Increase use & encourage uptake	HR leave records	Annual	HR Officer
Harassment Prevention	Formal anti-harassment policy adopted	None	Policy in place by 2026	Document approval	Mid-term	Equality Committee
Harassment Prevention	Confidential reporting channel active	None	Channel active by 2026	Internal audit	Mid-term	HR
Harassment Prevention	Staff trained on harassment prevention	None	100% trained by 2027	Training attendance	Annual	HR & Equality Committee



Gender Training	% of staff trained on gender equality	None	50% by 2026, 100% by 2027	Training attendance	Annual	Equality Committee
R&I Integration	Projects including gender analysis	Informal / occasional	Gender considered in all relevant projects	Project reviews	Annual	Project Manager & HR
Communication & Awareness	Publication of annual progress	No reports	Annual reports published	Website audit	Annual	Equality Committee

Every year, the organization will produce an internal report and a summary will be published on the organization’s website. This mirrors the European Commission’s commitment to report on its own progress annually. To make sure that activities continue to be in line with the needs, a mid-term review will be conducted in 2026. A final evaluation will be carried out in 2027 to provide guidance for the next GEP cycle.

6 Communication and Publication

Communication and transparency are essential for the success of GEP. The GEP will be published on the EUAbout website in the “About Us / Governance” section and will be communicated internally through email and meetings. Annual progress summaries will also be made publicly available online. Regular updates will be given to maintain employee engagement and show progress. This dedication to communication aligns with the EU’s strategy to launch an EU-wide campaign combatting gender stereotypes and to raise awareness of rights and policies.

7 Governance and Responsibilities

The successful implementation of GEP depends on accountability and clear roles. The Equality Committee will oversee the implementation of this plan. It will consist of the HR Officer, the Director and a staff representative. The committee will meet twice a year, monitor progress, collect data and propose corrective actions when needed. The HR Officer will act as the operational lead. EUAbout will allocate appropriate human and financial resources to support training, data collection and policy development. EUAbout



allocates dedicated human resources to the implementation of this Gender Equality Plan. Specifically, 10% of the HR Officer’s working time (0.1 FTE) is assigned to GEP-related tasks, including monitoring of indicators, coordination of actions, data collection and reporting, internal training support, and updates to relevant policies and procedures.

8 Anti-Harassment and Safety

A written anti-harassment policy will be introduced by 2026. This policy will define unacceptable behaviours, establish confidential reporting channels, ensure protection against retaliation, and set clear response timelines. Mandatory training for all staff will accompany this policy.

9 Gender in Research and Innovation

EUAbout participates in European projects linked to sustainability, innovation, training, communication and dissemination. Gender considerations will be integrated into these activities by promoting balanced participation where feasible, adopting inclusive and gender-neutral language, collecting gender-disaggregated participation data and assessing the impact of project activities on different target groups. This approach aligns with Horizon Europe’s emphasis on gender integration.

10 Timeline

Table 3: Timeline

Phase	Year
Baseline assessment	2024
Adoption of GEP	2025
Implementation period	2025–2027
First annual report	2026
Mid-term review	2026
Final evaluation	2027



11 Endorsement

This Gender Equality Plan has been formally endorsed by EUAbout's Director, Paolo Sospiro, on 22/02/2025

Signed: Paolo Sospiro, Director



Paolo Sospiro

12 Compliance Statement

This plan meets all mandatory elements set out in the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (2021), including public accessibility, leadership endorsement, dedicated resources, gender-disaggregated data collection, monitoring and indicators, training, and the integration of gender dimensions in research and innovation.