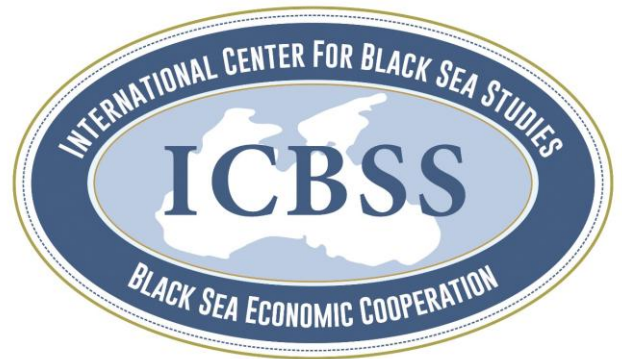




GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2023 - 2027



Gender Equality Plan - ICBSS



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Introduction

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) was founded in 1998 as a non-profit organization. It has since fulfilled a dual function a) as an independent research and training institution focusing on the wider Black Sea region, and b) as a related body of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and its think-tank.

Through a series of diverse activities, ICBSS aims to enhance knowledge, empower people and enable synergies in the wider Black Sea region and beyond.

ICBSS capitalizes on its dual role to advance effective synergies between scientific and advocacy work, at both regional and international levels.

As an independent research and training institution, the Centre elaborates and publishes research papers and studies, organizes a variety of scientific events, develops capacity building activities and manages research projects that seek to foster a comprehensive and cohesive approach towards important issues of the Black Sea region, with explicit measurable results at both the academic and political level.

As BSEC related body and think tank, the ICBSS participates in the deliberations of the BSEC Organization, and carries out studies, drafts policy documents and coordinates scientific activities upon specific mandates by BSEC. Placing special focus on fostering relations between the EU and the Black Sea region, the ICBSS is the Coordinator of the Ad hoc Group of Experts on BSEC-EU Interaction, since 2008.

Gender equality is the belief that men and women should be treated and perceived as equals in society, including all areas such as education, employment, and in decision-making positions. It is a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world.

Despite significant progress in advancing gender equality, women and girls continue to face barriers and discrimination in many areas of society. This includes the gender pay gap, difficult access to education and employment opportunities, and limited representation in leadership positions. Creating a more equal society benefits everyone, as it leads to greater prosperity and happiness for all. It is important for individuals, communities, and governments to work towards achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls to reach their full potential.

According to Horizon Europe, the new EU framework for Research and Innovation (2021-2027), as well as broad EU policies for the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of gender inequality and discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based violence, research organisations are required to prepare and implement Gender Equality Plans. In this context, the ICBSS developed and drafted the present Gender Equality Plan, which has taken into account the (international and national) regulatory framework on gender equality and presents the basic principles of actions to be implemented over the 2023-2027 period.

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International Regulatory

Gender Equality is a universal right ratified by International Treaties [e.g. the Charter of the United Nations of 1945, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966¹, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966², the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW - 1979)³, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing, 4 - 15 September 1995), the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul, 11 May 2011)⁴], by International Labour Organization Conventions, with arrangements for maternity protection and facilitation of employability for workers with family responsibilities (International Labour Organization Conventions 100, 103, 111, 156), by European Union Treaties (the Treaty of Rome of 1957, which established the European Economic Community, and the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1999, which introduced the principle of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual orientation to the EU Treaties), and by European Regulations and European Community Directives for the promotion of gender equality in the workplace and employment⁵.

Assessment of the current situation of ICBSS with regard to gender equality

An assessment of the current situation regarding gender (women's participation and gender aspects) is the first important step in ensuring that proposed actions are realistic, practical and to the point. The most obvious indications of gender gaps are to be found in inconsistencies in the number of women and men in the various ranks and positions available in the institution. Thus, according to the GAP adopted by the ICBSS, the first and most important step to be taken is to look for inequalities in numbers. Then it will be easier to look more deeply into the problems and inconsistencies.

¹ Law No. 2462/1997, Government Gazette A/25/1997.

² Law No. 1532/1985, Government Gazette A/25/1985.

³ Law No. 1342/1983

⁴ Law No. 4531/2018, Government Gazette 62/A/5.4.2018.

⁵ By way of illustration, see Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women regarding access to employment, vocational training and promotion, as well as working conditions, Directive 2002/73/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment and the prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination in the public sector, Directive 96/34/EC on parental leave as a means of reconciling work and family life, Directive 2004/113/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women regarding access to and supply of goods and services, Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women regarding matters of employment and occupation, Regulation (EC) No. 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 20.12.2006, regarding the establishment of the European Institute for Gender Equality, EE L 403, 30.12.2006.

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ICBSS Structure

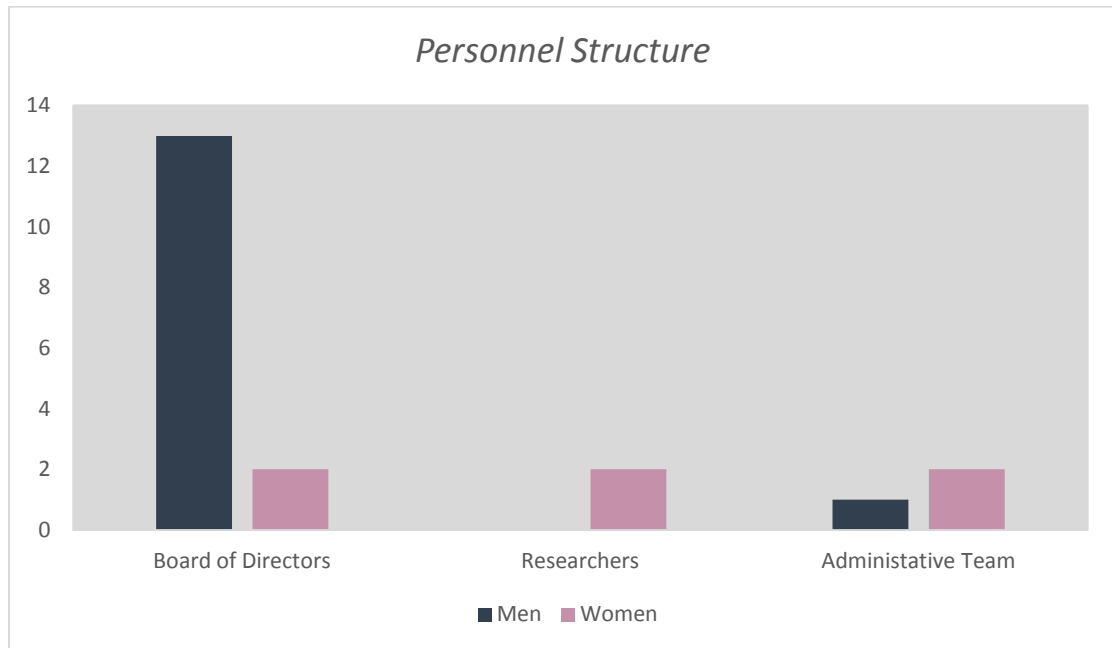


Table 1

Data collected at ICBSS shows that women occupy all research positions and more administration positions than men, but are under-represented in senior and managerial positions. The reasons for these discrepancies should be further investigated throughout the duration of the GEP and measures should be taken to check whether they are rooted in the following issues that usually affect women's progress:

- Indirect discrimination: refers to situations in which "gender neutral" regulations gender-biased effects because of the different situations of men and women. It is usually seen in recruitment and promotion processes.
- Obstacles to research: Especially in male-dominated fields, women usually take on the extra burden of administrative tasks, as they are required and expected to serve on various committees and councils. As a result, women have less time for their own research.
- Lack of gender equality education: Academic and administrative leadership often lack competence in gender issues (knowledge of gender equality policies, insight into policies, insight into direct and indirect mechanisms of discrimination, etc.), which could greatly facilitate the process of eliminating gender stereotypes and discrimination.
- Lack of work/life balance: Research suggests that the number of women in top positions in science does not reflect the number of PhDs and women in lower status positions, suggesting that most working environments do not take into consideration the work-life balance issues that many women face.

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Recommendations

Recommendations for change are presented along four dimensions: i) knowledge creation, ii) human capital, iii) practices and processes, and iv) regulation and compliance.

i. Knowledge making

It is important to introduce the gender dimension in knowledge creation and integrate methods of sex and gender analysis into basic and applied research. The most effective way to do this is by illustrating how the continuous gender analysis promotes excellence in research, with examples available in European institutions (e.g. DG Research, ESF), to institutional "change agents" (e.g. deans, provosts, opinion leaders, heads of departments). Both managers and researchers should be trained in the use of sex and gender analysis methods. In all evaluations - selection of papers for journals, appointments and promotions of individuals, grant reviews, etc - the use and knowledge of methods of sex and gender analysis in research must be an explicit issue for consideration. Funding agencies, journal editors, policy makers at all levels, leaders of scientific institutions, and agencies responsible for curriculum accreditation agencies, should be among those responsible for incorporating these methods into their assessment procedures.

ii. Human capital

Research teams should be gender diverse. Institutions should encourage gender diversity of teams through a variety of incentives (e.g. quality recognition and allocation of resources) and through transparency in recruitment. Women already in scientific institutions need to be made more visible. All public relations activities of scientific institutions should be gender-proofed (represent women appropriately), while avoiding tokenism. This could be done by including women in all campaigns to promote careers in science, by leaders nominating women for awards, and by recognizing women's achievements appropriately. Decisions on what to highlight should be informed by data from gender mainstreaming tools, such as sex-disaggregated data, information on resource allocation by sex, performance records, etc. Efforts to achieve gender balance should be made in all levels, with priority given to key decision-making bodies. Panels for the selection of grants and applicants must be gender diverse. This must also be the goal for management teams. Institutions should seek to improve the quality of their leadership by increasing awareness, understanding, and appreciation of and appreciation of different leadership styles. This can be achieved through training, self-reflection and various feedback mechanisms. In particular, diversity training is essential in this process.

iii. Practices and processes

Assessment procedures need to be redefined to focus on the quality, rather than the quantity, of publications and research output. This must be applied consistently at the individual, departmental, and other levels of evaluation. For example, researchers should select the most important articles they have produced in a given number of years, rather than listing all publications. However, qualitative assessment must also avoid gender bias (e.g., reliance on letters of recommendation in appointment procedures).

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Individuals with disproportionate administrative responsibilities should be provided with support staff to ensure that their research does not suffer. Policies and procedures that specifically affect working conditions that disproportionately affect men and women in research institutions need to be reviewed and revised to ensure that positive and professional development for both men and women. Revisions are needed in:

- Implementation of maternity and paternity leave policies at institutional level
- Institutional policies for later career development (e.g. maintaining contact with individuals taking career breaks; providing funding opportunities for individuals at critical career/life critical career/life moments and returning employees).
- Awareness of salary negotiation strategies (e.g. through targeted workshops and training for women).

iv. Regulation and compliance

Explicit goals for improving gender balance and action plans to achieve them must be included in the overarching gender strategy of scientific institutions. Progress must then be regularly monitored and published. Gender issues must be an integral part of the internal and external evaluation of institutions. Policies at all levels must demand this inclusion. This should begin with a critical review of processes within each institution, identifying current successes and failures. A member of the management team should be responsible for gender issues, such as following up on the institution's gender action strategy.

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