

EPWS Response to the Public Consultation on the Green Paper “European Research Area: New Perspectives”

Responses to the relevant Questions from the ERA Questionnaire

Title: Researchers

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More women will be attracted to and stay in research careers if:

- The opportunities for them to reach higher, decision-making positions are increased
- There is a greater understanding that less linear, traditional career paths are compatible with excellence. For example a woman who takes time out of her profession to take care of a family should not be evaluated as less “excellent” due to a break in her career path
- “Excellence” is also understood in such a way so as to include qualities prevailing in women, such as care of teams, high level of responsibility.

With regard to the specific questions in the Questionnaire while positive discrimination in recruitment may not initially attract woman to research careers, it may encourage women to **stay** in research careers. Moreover if research institutions show good gender-awareness and have gender mainstreaming programmes, this too will help and encourage women to stay in research careers.

While more women might be more attracted to and stay in research careers if “working and funding conditions that foster a better work/life balance are created”, this would also be true for male researchers.

Title: Research institutions

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The excellence and competitiveness of European research institutions will be increased if the following actions are taken:

- A diversity of employees in the workforce is supported, in terms of having a good gender balance and balance of age-groups and ethnicities. Studies by the private sector have proven that diverse teams work more effectively and take better account of societal issues.
- Progressive employment opportunities are put in place with research institutions establishing the right infrastructures and packages that attract excellent female researchers, for example the establishment of gender action plans.
- A better and more comprehensive understanding of the term “research infrastructure” is accepted, thus illustrating the comprehension that “*excellence and competitiveness of European research institutions will be increased*” when a good

research infrastructure facilitates researchers to do the best research by **providing support to all aspects of their lives**. The definition of good research infrastructure should also include child support facilities, options for flexible hours, the tools to support a proper life/work balance.

- A redressing of the current imbalance between male and female researchers in terms of resources allocated to them (money, technical facilities and equipment) is undertaken, thus ensuring a more equal distribution of resources.

Title: Knowledge Sharing

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Engaging the public and stakeholders in research decision-making processes. How can science decision-making better take into account societal concerns?:

- By representing all of society on decision-making boards, in terms of having an ethnic balance, gender balance, age balance. As a result the variety of concerns in societies, are more likely to be addressed
- Commend scientists for taking into consideration societal concerns
- If including expertise from civil society in decision-making, make distinction between those genuinely involved in research and those not
- Include stakeholders from the relevant community i.e include scientists organisations, associations
- Include gender expertise systematically in decision-making processes
- Increase transparency on how decisions are taken by boards and panels

Title: Research Programmes and Priorities

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Do we need to work together, more closely, at EU level for the planning of research priorities, implementation of research programmes and the evaluation and review of research?:

- With regard to project peer review and research evaluation, the EU needs to work more closely in terms of developing common, inclusive evaluation criteria and a transparent and fair way of composing peer review panels.
- There is a need for assessment and dissemination of results concerning projects financed by the EU in order to help in addressing future priorities.

Title: International Dimension

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Question INT1 (ii) How can the European Commission and Member States work more closely together to ensure a coordinated and efficient use of instruments and resources?:

- More awareness of the positive results of collaborative research for individual countries should help to counter the disparity between the different sums Member States currently invest in research

- Increased awareness of the positive results of collaborative research for individual countries is also necessary in order to persuade EU Member States to participate in research collaboration in which they might not always only fund researchers from their own country
- For the full development of a European Research Area, Europe needs excellent national centres of research. National institutions should be encouraged to invest more in their own infrastructures in order to make Europe more competitive.