Efficient Gender Equality in Research and the Academia

SP4 – CAPACITIES
COORDINATION AND SUPPORT ACTION, SUPPORTING
ACTION FP7 – SCIENCE – IN – SOCIETY – 2013 - 1

Deliverable Number: D.1.4

Summary of Experiences shared by the EGERA CoP on Institutional resistances

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Dissemination Level: Public

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Introduction

This deliverable addresses the issue of institutional resistances to the implementation of Gender Equality Action Plans in the EGERA institutions. As per the Grant Agreement of the project, this was to be done under several tasks placed under different work packages.

Granted with the responsibility to support the development of a true Community of Practitioners (CoP) of structural changes towards gender equality in research and the academia, Work Package 1, coordinated by Sciences Po, thus planned on-line exchanges on the issues of GEPs’ implementation and resistances to change. Under WP2 (Assessing Gender Inequalities and Biases), led by METU, a specific task was devoted to measuring resistances to organizational changes brought by the project, while under WP3 (Building Gender Equality Culture), UA carried out a mapping of resistances posed specifically to conciliation measures held in Gender Equality Plans. Under WP4 (Training Academic Communities), by developing a business case for integrating gender in curricula, Radboud University thus addressed potential resistances to bringing a gender dimension in university teaching. In WP5 (Revisiting Governance and Evaluation Models), Sciences Po carried out a pilot study on gender biases in governance and evaluation, which included a mapping of gender equality frames at Sciences Po, unraveling in which types of frames some institutional resistances are rooted. Finally, WP6 (Strengthening a Gender Perspective in Research) notably aimed at producing recommendations in dealing with resistances to the inclusion of gender in research.

Therefore, altogether, implementing partners covered a large spectrum of resistances, located both at the individual and organizational levels, and strived all through the project, to address them as an integral part of the process of change itself. This cumulative effort resulted in four issue-specific deliverables. The present deliverable is only an addendum to these different pieces of work, which aimed at documenting the continuous reflection jointly led by partners on the broad issue of institutional resistances. It is worth mentioning, however, that unlike all other deliverables submitted under this project, this deliverable suffered a slight deviation both in the method and content. With regards to the first, the methodology of online forums, used to exchange experiences on GEP’s implementation had been tested through four online sessions between the end of May and mid-June 2015, and structured around as much topics. This technical option, which used a software application called Proboard, had been preferred to upgrading the central tool of our project, SARAH-AGORA, which does not offer the possibility to structure “live” forums. Yet, it could not be effectively repeated for exchanging about institutional resistances, as the overall project’s work plan was simultaneously affected by a) the postponing of EGERA meetings to be held in Vechta from M35 to M39 due to the strike of the major german airlines, and b) the cancellation for security reasons of the EGERA meetings to be held in METU on M38. Rescheduling the work plan consecutively entailed the use of significant resources by partners. As a consequence, forums launched on institutional resistances amidst these changes did not allow for collecting sufficient experiences.
Instead, it was decided to cover institutional resistances as part of the final EGERA seminar to be held during the final dissemination event, in October, 2017, and to complement experiences shared at this later stage of the project, by a brief summary of how resistances to institutional change can impact the implementation of Gender Equality Plans, and how they should be dealt with.

1. Defining institutional resistances

With Lombardo and Mergaert (2013): “We define resistance as a phenomenon that emerges during processes of change — such as when gender equality policies are implemented — and that is aimed at maintaining the status quo and opposing change” (Lombardo & Mergaert 2013: 299).1 Resistance are both individual and institutional. Benschop and Verloo2 (2006) provide an example of institutional resistance concerning a gender mainstreaming initiative with civil servants in the Ministry of the Flemish Community in Belgium. They showed that civil servants can express resistance to gender initiatives both by acting and by non-acting. Institutional resistance has also been emphasized by Stratigaki3 (2005), who draws attention on institutions that dedicate insufficient economic and human resources to gender equality.

Lombardo and Mergaert (2015)4 cross individual and institutional resistances with their implicit or explicit forms: “The individual and the institutional levels are interconnected because institutions are a collective of individuals. [...] In this light, it is important to distinguish between implicit individual resistance and implicit institutional resistance. The former manifests itself through non-action or inadequate action, either caused by compliance with the existing gender norms or by a lack of resources (including knowledge and skills, time, financial resources, and power). The latter occurs when the mentioned incapacity is detectable at a collective level, and is connected to policy decisions about resources that are taken in the higher ranks of an organization” (Lombardo & Mergaert 2015: 64).

Louise Chappell and Georgina Waylen, in their effort to theorize how gender norms contribute to shape institutional systems and how they actually work, remind us that “The institutional dominance of particular forms of masculinity has taken us from seeing gender as operating only at an individual level, to viewing it as regime complete with ‘rules, procedures, discourses

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and practices’ (...)” (Chappell and Waylen 2013:602). Two perspectives on institutions can be identified, embedded in two versions of new institutionalism:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>New Institutionalism</th>
<th>Feminist Institutionalism</th>
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<td>Institutions: cultural norms, rules, established practices; formal and informal</td>
<td>Gendered institutions</td>
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2. Exemplifying institutional resistances

As pointed out in D.3.1 Summary of Mapping of resistances to reconciliation policies and work/life reconciliation measures guidelines, the academic environment is one of the places where dominant societal gender norms and cultural codes are being reproduced. These pervade the organizational culture, and can include ideas regarding parenthood, family models or standards for measuring professionalism. Such norms offer as much potential sources of resistances to several reconciliation measures: for instance implicitly not considering a parental leave “a man’s job” or viewing part time schedules as the evidence of a lack of ambition.

These norms do not necessarily oppose “reconciliation in a direct way, but they do impact immensely on the overall work atmosphere in which a staff member is embedded when taking decisions concerning the organization of her/his professional career. Such norms and values set the standards in a strict homogenous way” (D.3.1: 10). Types of resistances exemplified by the implementation of reconciliation measures, highlights the broader role played by enshrined conceptions with regards to what a good researcher or academic should be, what is a valid career path, which aspect of research are valuable and which not. In a usually very hierarchical environment as the academia, institutional resistances – for instance to conciliation measures, but also to positive action for gender-balanced recruitment, can also originate in a vision of scientific career as requiring full dedication, flexibility and adherence to the norms set by generations of researchers and/or disciplinary structures.

This aspect is extensively addressed in D.5.1 Pilot study on gender bias in governance and evaluation. M. Van den Brink and Y. Benschop (2012) argue that gender practices in the...
academia “include both the practices that continuously reproduce gender inequalities and the practices that aim to bring about gender equality.” (2012: 73) Focusing on the recruitment and selection of full professors in The Netherlands, they state that “excellence is not something one is born with but is the outcome of a stimulating work environment, infrastructure and social capital that has to be given meaning and valued in a certain context.” (2012:83) They highlight the processes of continuous and informal support between male academics, as “academic male elites nurture their male successors from the beginning of their career and teach them the informal rules of the field, so that they know how to survive in this highly political culture” (2012: 83). Challenging the “masculine standard” in evaluation as well as the gendered unequal access to informal information seems therefore to be the major changes at stake, and the governance of academic excellence cannot achieve gender equality without addressing both issues of the under-representation of women and the implicit gendered features of academic excellence.

This aspect is evidenced in this reflection posted by METU during a first on-line exchange including the issue of institutional resistances, held in 2015:

“The main institutional resistance concerns the idea that all operations related to recruitment, promotion, etc. in METU are based on the ‘merit’ principle. Therefore, the same criteria applies to all employees, women and men, academic and administrative, with the belief that this creates neutrality and objectivity. However, particularly concerning academic positions, it can be said that women face with significantly more obstacles concerning promotion since the biggest move in their career from non-tenured to tenured position comes up during the particular period of the life cycle in which they give birth and take care of their young children. The merit principle creates a general belief that all procedures aim at equality among employees, and operates, in fact, as an important resistance point to the achievement of gender equality (...) Also, work culture should be pointed as another resistance point, implying informal channels of decision-making, late-hour meetings, discriminatory and / or patriarchal attitudes of managers / administrators, etc.”

Another point was elaborated by Albenga (2016), drawing upon the pilot study carried out on gender biases in research governance at Sciences Po. It reveals that the gender expertise mobilized to carry out institutional change can produce both inclusive and academic knowledge, but that the valuation of this knowledge remains a major issue. Indeed, she argues, “the scholarly capital in gender studies can be denied by stakeholders who refuse the very existence of gender inequality or underestimate certain issues”⁸. This type of resistance, which is expressed by individuals but tells a great deal about power relations within academic institutions (notably among disciplines which are more or less consolidated institutionally), reflects, as shown by Albenga in the case of Sciences Po, in different strategic framings of gender equality issues:

• Narrow, when equality means “parity” and gender inequality is replaced by “discrimination”
• Euphemistic, when structural sexism, homophobia and gender-based violence are hidden by “discrimination”
• Denial, when relating gender pay gap to seniority and sector-based gaps rather than gender

This lack of legitimacy of gender knowledge in general, and the resistances it triggers, were also evidenced under Work Package four regarding integrating gender in curricula. Exchanges held in Ravenstein during a joint seminar on gender in curricula of STAGES and EGERA project (March, 2015), have shown that the process of integrating gender in curricula generally confronts with various challenges and resistances on different levels. A significant resistance towards supporting the integration of gender in curricula is the lack of institutional legitimacy. Scholars who introduce gender courses often face the challenge of having to convince of its value and necessity within the institution. What does not really contribute to solving this problem, is the strong culture of autonomy characterizing the institutional context of academia. Although it may vary across countries and disciplines, this ethics of autonomy is often alleged to prevent what is perceived as an external intervention, if not as social engineering. Another hindering factor at the management level is that decision-making processes are largely gender blind. In order to initiate any changes towards more legitimacy of gender in curricula, it is therefore important to convince the university management to put gender on the agenda. Similar factors also apply, and to a greater extent, to explain resistances to the integration of a gender dimension in research, as addressed under WP6 (Strengthening the gender dimension in research), which among other tasks, collected good practices supporting the case of gender in research.
3. Dealing with institutional resistances

Institutions shall be interpreted as *battlegrounds for different sorts of norms*. If taking the case of gender mainstreaming implementation, it can be argued that while bureaucratic principles demand gender mainstreaming implementation (as they do for other sources of institutional transformation), patriarchic principles require its evaporation⁹. Patriarchy (be it subsumed at the level of individual preferences, unwritten norms or institutionalized practices) however, is not the only source of resistances to institutional change for gender equality. The bureaucratic logic can also be in itself a source of inertia, opposing requested or advocated changes for reasons which – at least in appearance – are not connected to patriarchy, but to “ways of doing things”, problems of (material, human or time) resources allocation, or legal issues.

Yet, if those upon whom falls part of the charge of implementing change are part of the problem, they are also part of the solution. As evidenced by EGERA and other similar projects, this shift largely depends on the systematic development and institutionalization, of awareness-raising and gender training actions. Additionally, the power of agency does not belong solely to the bureaucratic structure, but also, although in variable measures, to gender equality advocates who are pushing to bring this question on the agenda and find ways of transforming the structure¹⁰. These agents need to be identified and they need to be brought together to make change happen. It remains that wherever they come from, analysing resistances helps explain the non-implementation of gender equality. Identifying resistances, as an analytical exercise helps:

- Understanding the obstacles to the implementation of gender mainstreaming
- Identifying obstacles and overcome them

It can be assumed that when the institutional culture protects male privileges, the implementation of gender mainstreaming will necessarily face opposition, and that this resistance is a valid evidence of the changes being implemented.

In the two first presentations annexed to these section, members of the EGERA SKU team account of their experience in dealing with both individual and institutional resistances to structural changes, by building consent around common diagnoses and action through Group Model Building. In the third presentation, Sciences Po EGERA team shares its own experience of politicizing gender equality policies, so as to place gender equality higher on the strategic agenda of the institution, create accountability, and overcome resistances.

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The power of group model building interventions

Seminar Final EGERA conference
October 17th 2017, Paris

Pleun van Arensbergen
Monic Lansu
Inge Bleijenbergh
Etiënne Rouwette
The method of Group Model Building

• Participatory intervention method
• Involving stakeholders & experts
• Facilitated model building
• System dynamics approach
• Structuring messy problems
• Gender equality training
• Applied at EGERA partner institutes
The aims of Group Model Building

• Supporting group vs individual learning
• Fostering consensus about the problem
• Creating commitment towards actions
Example of (part of) a causal loop diagram

- **Proportion of women staff**
  - **Women in hiring committees**
  - **Proportion of women staff**
  - **inflow of women staff**
  - **number of women staff**
  - **gender aware leadership**

- **Competitive culture**
  - **Stereotypical image of scientist**
  - **Visibility of women staff**
  - **Insecurity career perspective**

- **Implicit bias in hiring/promotion**
  - **Informal recruitment**
  - **Special programs for women**
  - **Support dual career - care - equal pay**
  - **Funding for female students**
  - **Programs or grant schemes for female researchers**

- **Throughput women students to women staff**
  - **Throughput women students to women staff**
  - **Funding for female students**

**Overall Impact**

Positive influences (+)

Negative influences (-)
Power in group model building

• Stakeholders varying in position

• Literature: Power affects communication
e.g.- leaders speak longer, interrupt more, determine discussion topics (Allwood, 1980)
  - high power stronger express private opinions and true attitudes (Magee & Galinsky, 2008)
  - high power contribute more ideas & opinions, low power contribute more facts, questions
    and positive evaluations (Silver et al., 2000)

• GMB equivalence as starting point

• This study: focus on legitimate power and GMB process

• How do interaction activities differ between actors in GMB sessions,
  particularly between actors varying in legitimate power?
Analyzing social interaction in groups

R. Bales Interaction Process Analysis

- **Task** directed answers (giving information, opinions, suggestions)
- **Task** directed questions (asking for information, opinions, suggestions)
- Positive **social emotional** reactions (showing solidarity, laughing, agreeing)
- Negative **social emotional** reactions (disagreeing, showing tension, showing antagonism)
Group model building case

- Science faculty of Dutch university
- 2 sessions of 4 hours each
- 11 participants (6 men and 5 women)
  - Dean
  - Directors
  - HRM
  - Academic staff (postdoc - professors)
  - Gender expert
- Facilitation team
  - Facilitator
  - Modeler

- Audiotapes fully transcribed and coded according to Bales’ IPA
Preliminary results: group behavior over time

% of actions by category over time:
- Social-emotional: positive
- Task: answers
- Task: questions
- Social-emotional: negative

Introduction, problem definition & inventory
Modeling
Modeling & closing
Preliminary results: Interaction profiles / roles

- **Facilitator**
  - Social-emotional: positive 44%
  - Task: answers 15%
  - Task: questions 4%
  - Social-emotional: negative 0%

- **Gender Expert**
  - Social-emotional: positive 70%
  - Task: answers 7%
  - Task: questions 0%
  - Social-emotional: negative 23%

- **Participant**
  - Social-emotional: positive 38%
  - Task: answers 13%
  - Task: questions 1%
  - Social-emotional: negative 20%

- **Participant**
  - Social-emotional: positive 31%
  - Task: answers 18%
  - Task: questions 12%
  - Social-emotional: negative 39%
Mean number of acts through time for high and low power participants

[Bar chart showing the mean number of acts through time for high and low power participants in different stages of the process: introduction, problem definition, inventory; modeling; and modeling & closing. Each stage is divided into categories such as SocEmPos, SocEmNeg, TaakAns, and TaakQue, with high and low power indicated by different colors.]
Preliminary conclusions

- Participants take on different informal roles
- GMB equivalence claim not fully confirmed
- Scripts influence social interaction and may facilitate power leveling

- Is this problematic?
- In GMB influence of individual is limited, consensus based
- Further research needed linking these results to GMB outcomes
Thank you

p.vanarensbergen@fm.ru.nl
Mean number of acts through time for high and low power participants: task oriented answering

High power participants also show more solidarity, agreement and antagonism in 2nd phase
mean number of acts of high and low power participants

introduction, problem definition, inventory modeling modeling & closing

high low
Preliminary results: group behavior over time (2)
Preliminary results: interaction profiles high & low power

- **Low Power**
  - Social-emotional: positive: 12%
  - Task: answers: 33%
  - Task: questions: 3%
  - Social-emotional: negative: 52%

- **High Power**
  - Social-emotional: positive: 11%
  - Task: answers: 35%
  - Task: questions: 5%
  - Social-emotional: negative: 49%
Mean number of acts through time for high and low power participants: social emotional positive

- **Introduction, problem definition, inventory:**
  - High power: Shows solidarity
  - Low power: Shows solidarity
  - High power: Shows tension release
  - Low power: Shows tension release
  - High power: Agrees
  - Low power: Agrees

- **Modeling:**
  - High power: Shows solidarity
  - Low power: Shows solidarity
  - High power: Shows tension release
  - Low power: Shows tension release
  - High power: Agrees
  - Low power: Agrees

- **Modeling & closing:**
  - High power: Shows solidarity
  - Low power: Shows solidarity
  - High power: Shows tension release
  - Low power: Shows tension release
  - High power: Agrees
  - Low power: Agrees
Relishing resistance? Managers negotiating problem ownership in gender equality interventions

October 16-18, 2017

Monic Lansu, MSc MA
Dr. Inge Bleijenbergh
Prof. Yvonne Benschop
Resistance to organizational change towards gender equality

Resistance as detrimental
(Benschop & Verloo, 2006; Goltz & Sotirin, 2014; Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013, 2016
OR:
Resistance as a tool for gender equality change
(Benschop & van den Brink, 2014; Bleijenbergh 2017)

Theoretical assumption: resistance might contribute to transformational change through the negotiations it generates on problem ownership.

Research objective: contributing to the debate on transformational change, by examining the position and negotiations of managers towards problem ownership and shifts in problem ownership during gender equality interventions.

Case study: gender equality interventions at three research institutes in a Dutch Science faculty. Interviews, audio taped interventions and field notes. Selection of negotiations of six managers (4 male, 2 female managers).
Positions towards problem ownership regarding gender inequality

Low problem ownership
Considering gender inequality a coincidental side effect of meritocracy; prioritizing other organisational problems.

Medium problem ownership
Awareness that something has to be done to support gender equality, but being sceptical about the possibility of change → change recipient rather than change agent.

High problem ownership:
Acknowledging the importance of gender equality, willingness to learn about the dynamics and what can be done → change agent.
Negotiating problem ownership

Minimizing the work of problem ownership

*This we can really [treat] as one of those things that we have to pay attention to continuously. Then you can just tick the box. It comes on in 2016, and doesn’t get off before 2026. It needs long-lasting attention. […] And with my [yearly, author] state of the institute, if I put in a slide on how we are doing with gender, […] that would be a very good one, I’ve got nothing against that. […] We always have yearly discussions with the directors of all groups, then we always have a whole list of things. We could easily add gender balance. […] Touch upon it, as agenda point, nothing wrong with that (Male manager)*
Negotiating problem ownership

Ambivalent problem ownership

The actual environment that we have now, is made by us, made by the male dominated society. And so it is very much driven into competitiveness, and not into compromise. [...] If you look around at meetings you see also very successful females and they have a very female group. And therefore females seem to be very happy in a setting where there is a different culture. [...] So I think we have created an extremely competitive setting which becomes worse and worse (Male manager)
Negotiating problem ownership

Diffusing problem ownership

[...] Eh, WHAT DOES KAPPA WANT? HELLO? Who are Kappa? That is US. Here, all of us together. There is no, what does Kappa want. That doesn’t exist. Who are THEY? I have no idea [...]. Kappa is us! We are here with a community of people together, and have to take care that everybody can function WELL, that qualities are fully valued, that people feel comfortable in their position, and can fully develop themselves. [...] The question is, how are WE ALL going to solve this, each from his own responsibility. [...] Now we are going to see whether we can touch those levers, but those [...] are levers that we REALLY need to operate ALL of us, otherwise it won’t work. [...] As if someone, you know, is accountable for that. We are, REALLY, we are all of us in this together, sorry! (Male manager)
Discussion: tensions and paradoxes in problem ownership

Paradox: changing the calls organization for common effort, but clear managerial problem ownership has the power to sustain change (Janssens & Zanoni, 2014).

Tension: Discursive position versus practical implementation in a discursive intervention– do managers walk the talk?

Paradox: Scrutinizing numbers supports revealing structural inequalities, but can remain an empty effort in itself.

Tension: Negotiations about gender as a problem with numbers (ticking the boxes) versus gender as a problem of organizational culture.
Building Accountability and Engaging the Whole Academic Community to Achieve Gender Equality and Gender Sensitive Research. The Experience of EGERA

Maxime Forest, PhD
Senior Researcher and Lecturer, Sciences Paris
Where do we (all) stand?

**A momentum for gendering research?**

- In the EU, there is **about 1,500 universities and research performing organizations carrying out gender equality plans/strategies**
- In various countries, this results from a **legal obligation** at the national and/or the sub-national level and provisions on gender equality in laws regulating science are becoming more frequent
- In the UK and Ireland, the **Athena-SWAN** has generated nearly 500 equality strategies in over 150 universities and RPOs
- Since FP7, several generations of structural change projects + GenderNet have been developing **increasingly holistic approaches**
- Venues for mutual learning multiply, efforts become more cumulative, a **finer-grained picture of success factors and resistances emerges**
And yet, efforts remain tedious and thorny...

- **Little resources** are made available to these strategies, which are often led in isolation from the institution itself.
- **Their scope is too often limited** to fixing numbers and improving work-life balance = big gaps.
- **Limited evaluation** and monitoring (if any) = dead letters.
- Gender equality and gender dimension in science **disconnected from “actual” challenges posed to science and innovation**: Excellence often opposed to mainstreaming gender.
- **Structural change projects** = new standard for GEPs, but **no guarantee for greater visibility, accountability, efficiency or sustainability**.
Bigger challenges lead to bigger resistances

- **Fighting horizontal & vertical sex segregation**: de-masculinizing science, fostering gender-balance in all positions and types of jobs, challenging recruitment routines and opening “black boxes”

- **Creating safe, gender-sensitive academic environments**: breaking taboos about harassment and sexism, transforming language, acknowledging failures and creating accountability

- **Assessing governance and evaluation**: unravelling unformal rules and practices, challenging power positions, reshaping evaluation

- **Bringing a gender perspective in research**: changing the meanings of academic excellence and research quality, forcing multi-disciplinarity, interfering with misconception of “academic freedom” and meritocracy
We know about basic success factors...

- Carrying out both **quantitative and qualitative** diagnoses
- Mobilizing and transferring (gender) knowledge
- Securing **top-level support** to increase legitimacy
- Adopting an **holistic** approach in terms of issues and targets
- Institutionalizing gender expertise and policies
- Monitoring changes and evaluating actions
... but are those sufficient?

Each of these goals triggers specific resistances, ranging from inertia, through contestation to frank hostility... and **none can be fully attained if gender equality and the gender dimension in research are not brought to the level of strategic challenges connected to:**

- International competition in university training, knowledge production and innovation
- The global transformation of university teaching
- The growing financial autonomy of RPOs
- The professionalization of research management
Our baseline:

All EGERA partners are committing efforts to negotiate changes with highest management levels, using different levers and strategies.

Core project activities are devoted to challenging governance and evaluation from a gender perspective > Charter for gender sensitive research governance and evaluation (released: November, 2016)

At Sciences Po, backgrounds efforts included:

- Opening direct channels for our gender equality officer to report to our general secretary and director (notes, regular meetings)
- Finding allies among top managers through regular awareness-rising actions and targeted communication
- Institutionalizing gender equality policies and training (incorporated into existing schemes, framing documents, regulations and practices)
But we also strived for creating accountability:

Bottom-up:

✓ Making commitments public (HeforShe, National Press)
✓ Social media as a record of pledges and a measure of support
✓ Students and social partners as advocates for changes
Peer level:
✓ Activating benchmarking (among institutions, services or units)
✓ Naming & shaming: it’s all about reputation, stupid!

Top-down:
✓ Sharing commitments with top and mid management
✓ Mainstreaming a culture of equality
Engaging the whole community means...

✓ Targeted awareness and training actions for all components of the community

✓ **Mobilizing students** through new fora... and **making them responsible and accountable** > Charter of gender equality in students’ life

✓ **Empowering staff and their representatives** by providing new data and widely disseminating them

✓ **Making sexual harassment a concern for everyone** (in terms of reporting, monitoring and actions)