

Gender Equality Plan (GEP), 2023

1 Preamble

NEC is a private research institute. It currently has 17 people in its permanent staff (12 women and 5 men), and 27 researchers employed in various short-term, externally funded projects (11 women and 16 men). NEC has about 25 fellows selected annually who spend in the institute one or two semesters. Some other fellows or guests visit the institute for shorter stays. In 2020–2021, 17 of the selected fellows in residence for at least one semester were women and 10 were men. In 2021–2022 we had 13 men and 13 women as fellows, and in 2022–2023 a total of 15 men and 7 women.

The principle of equality of opportunity is an inherent part of our organizational culture. NEC is committed to ensuring that all its staff and fellows are respected. It promotes equal pay for equal work, promotes gender equality and work-life balance, tackles gender stereotypes and promotes positive role models, combats gender-based violence and ensures equal participation and representation in decision-making and leadership positions. NEC has established a gender mainstreaming approach to promote cooperation, reduce barriers, increase awareness and combat all types of discrimination.

The NEC management and staff are actively involved in the implementation of GEP's actions. A commission comprising two staff members is tasked with this aim and collaborates with the management and the HR/accounting office to collect and analyze gender-related data. An internal report is prepared each year and its results will help the management take corrective actions in areas where improvements are needed.

The legal framework for equal opportunities and inclusion

Romania has in place legislation that regulates the field. We list below some of the main legal instruments that we follow:

Law 202/2002 for Equality of Opportunities between Women and Men;

Law 125/2016 on Romania's accession to the European Centre for Interdependence and Global Solidarity, created by Resolution (89)14, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 23 October 1993;

Law 66/2016 amending and supplementing OUG 111/2010 on leave and monthly allowance for raising children;

Law 22/2016 for declaring The Women's Day on March 8 and The Men's Day on November 19;

Law 23/2015 for declaring 8 May the Day of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men;

Ordinance 111/2010 on leave and monthly allowance for raising children, with subsequent amendments and completions;

Law 62/2009 for the approval of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 61/2008 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to and supply of goods and services;

Ordinance 61/2008 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between women and men in the access to goods and services and the supply of goods and services, with subsequent amendments and additions;

Ordinance 67 of 27 June 2007 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in occupational social security schemes;

Ordinance 137/2000 on the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, republished, with subsequent amendments and additions;

3 Law 210/1999 on Paternal Leave.

Objectives

1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

NEC has already created a workplace environment that supports employees in balancing their work and personal lives, while also promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect.

According to national and European legislation, NEC has put in place measures that:

- allow staff members, associated researchers and fellows flexible work arrangements (e.g. part-time work, telework);
- support their needs for caregiving responsibilities (e.g. parental leave, child care);
- support initiatives to foster a more inclusive and respectful workplace environment, through training on diversity and inclusion, policies against harassment and discrimination.

Staff, researchers and fellows are supported to advance their career alongside personal responsibilities that they have outside of the Institute, including caring responsibilities.

In line with European regulation, we plan to implement further measures that can lead to higher employee satisfaction and improve NEC performance:

- analyze a fair distribution of workload, including how different tasks are allocated and distributed, and reintegration of staff after career breaks, including active mentoring and support (by December 2023);
- inform and train staff, researchers and fellows with relevant information (to be done annually, at the beginning of each academic year).

Area 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

NEC is an institution committed to gender equality in leadership and decision-making. The current managerial team (Rector and Executive Director) are women, whereas the president of the Foundation that runs the Institution is a man. The Administrative Board consists of six men and two women, whereas academic decisions are made with support from the Academic Board (five men and three women).

We plan to implement further measures to preserve gender equality, including in leadership and decision-making. We are aware that achieving gender balance in decision-making requires more than just a fair representation.

- we thus aim to review decision-making and selection processes to ensure decisions consider gender issues and that women and men are empowered to take an equal role (by December 2023);
- people in decision-making positions are provided with gender equality training, a crucial element to help mitigate conscious and unconscious selection biases, but also to raise awareness and understanding of the gender dynamics at play in interactions during meetings (to be done annually).

Area 3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

NEC is committed to promote equal opportunities for women and men in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and career development processes, with the aim of eliminating gender-based discrimination and ensuring a balanced work environment for all its employees and fellows.

NEC selects staff and fellows through the organisation of open competitions which are publicly announced via national and European platforms and social media. All announcements meet the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, and equal opportunities and are carefully checked for gender-sensitive language, also in agreement with the European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

We further plan to:

- make sure that all our calls for application include non-discriminatory language, gender-neutral descriptions and requirements that provide equal opportunities for all candidates (done annually);
- review our selection and recruitment procedures, in accordance with European legislation and recommendations (by December 2023).
- monitor the number of female and male candidates in each recruitment round and act if clear imbalances are visible (done after each competition)

Area 4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content

As a research institute, NEC has been committed on promoting the inclusion of gender perspectives and analysis in research, with the aim of advancing gender equality and promoting

greater awareness of gender issues among our fellows, researchers and staff. Several of the NEC fellows have completed research projects from a gender studies perspective, encouraging critical thinking about gender in all aspects of academic work.

We further plan to:

- inform and train staff, researchers and fellows with relevant information on gender analysis and inclusion (to be done annually, at the beginning of each academic year).

Area 5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

NEC has been committed to implementing the principles of the European Charter and Code for Researchers. Over the year, we have strived to nurture a culture of gender equality, healthy academic life and inclusiveness.

We further plan:

- inform and train staff, researchers and fellows with relevant information on gender equality, non-discriminatory attitudes and inclusion (to be done annually, at the beginning of each academic year);

- develop and implement a comprehensive policy on gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and behaviours that violate any individual's dignity or that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It will outline clear procedures for reporting, investigation, sanctions, but also support for victims (by December 2023).

Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) allows us to assess the progress of the GEP and to identify the areas where improvements are needed.

NEC will draft and publish an annual progress report that include qualitative and quantitative data which will be shared with the entire NEC staff and collaborators. We plan to use the results of the M&E process to inform decision-making and to guide future actions. Corrective actions should be taken to address issues in areas where improvements are needed.

The current GEP was discussed and adopted during the weekly staff meeting on Wednesday, March 29, 10.00 am EET. The members of the GEP commission within NEC are Ioana Manolache and Constantin Ardeleanu.

Lelia CIOBOTARIU, Executive Director NEC

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April. 2023

