



# Gender Equality Plan

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**The Board Members of Economica,**  
  
represented by Dr. Daniela Grozea-  
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# Introduction

Since its very inception, the Economica Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (Economica Institute for Economic Research) has always been and continues to be committed to foster an inclusive and equitable work environment that reflects the diverse society in which we operate. Our mission as an economics research institute is not only to contribute to the advancement of economic knowledge but also to ensure that our workplace and research activities are free from gender biases and inequalities. Economica, which is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, is among the very few economics research institutes in Europe which maintains institutional operations outside its home country, viz. in Bratislava, Slovakia, and Cologne, Germany. Hence, diversity, versatility, freedom from prejudice, and intercultural communication capabilities are constituents of our identity. To this end, we also adhere to a Gender Equality Plan, which outlines our strategic approach to promoting (not only) gender equality across all aspects of our organization.

This plan is designed to address the key areas where gender disparities may exist and to establish clear objectives and actions to maintain an equitable workplace. It aligns with Austrian law, including the Equal Treatment Act (Gleichbehandlungsgesetz), and is informed by best practices in gender equality and diversity management. Our commitment to gender equality is not just a legal obligation but a fundamental principle that underpins our organizational culture, decision-making processes, and research activities.

Promoting gender equality is essential for the sustainable growth and success of our institute. Diverse teams contribute to more innovative and comprehensive economic research, while an inclusive organizational culture enhances employee satisfaction and retention. By addressing potential gender imbalances and ensuring equal opportunities for all employees, we are better positioned to attract top talent, foster a productive work environment, and produce high-quality research outputs that consider diverse perspectives.

Moreover, as a research institution, we recognize the critical importance of integrating gender dimensions into our research and teaching content. This not only enhances the relevance and impact of our work but also ensures that our research contributes to a more inclusive and equitable society.

# 1. Guiding Principles

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of our non-profit economics research institute is founded on a comprehensive framework of international, European, and national legal and normative documents, including the following key references:

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN).** Austria, alongside other UN member states, has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>1</sup>, which includes SDG 5 focused on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. As part of our GEP, we align with SDG 5's objectives<sup>2</sup> to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women, ensure equal opportunities for leadership, recognize the value of unpaid care work (ICSR, 2022),

**European Union (EU) Treaties and Strategies.** As an EU-based research organization, our GEP is informed by the EU's commitment to gender equality, as enshrined in the founding treaties and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025<sup>3</sup>. This includes eliminating gender stereotypes, preventing gender-based violence, closing the gender pay and care gaps, and ensuring equal participation in decision-making. We adopt a gender mainstreaming approach, ensuring that gender

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/en/topics/sustainable-development-2030-agenda-sdgs.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

<sup>3</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en)

perspectives are integrated into all research, administrative, and planning activities to achieve fair and equitable outcomes for all (ICSR, 2022).

**Horizon 2020 Gender Equality Provisions.** Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation framework, emphasizes gender equality as a crosscutting principle<sup>4</sup>. Our institute is committed to maintaining the participation and visibility of female researchers, especially in leadership roles, and to expanding research on gender equality. It deserves mentioning that the institute was established by a team of proponents in line with the principle of gender parity which has been maintained since. We strive to eliminate gender inequalities in our research processes and outcomes, reflecting the values of Horizon 2020.

**Austrian National Legislation.** Our GEP is also guided by Austrian law, particularly the Federal Equal Opportunities Act (Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz)<sup>5</sup>, which prohibits gender-based discrimination in employment, mandates equal representation in organizational bodies, and addresses sexual harassment as a form of gender discrimination. This legislation requires measures to promote women's advancement, ensure gender-neutral communication, and establish working groups dedicated to gender equality. Our institute is committed to comply with these legal requirements, promoting equal opportunities and fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace culture.

Through these guiding principles, our institute commits to advancing gender equality in all aspects of our operations, research, and organizational culture.

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<sup>4</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research\\_and\\_innovation/strategy\\_on\\_research\\_and\\_innovation/documents/ec\\_rtd\\_gender-equality-factsheet.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/ec_rtd_gender-equality-factsheet.pdf)

<sup>5</sup><https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10008858>



## 2. Objective and Tasks

### 2.1. Work-Life balance and organizational culture

Opportunities to balance work and personal life have been developed to meet the individual requirements and preferences of our teams. The following implementation goals guide this effort:

**Support and guidance during re-entry phases following maternity leave, parental leave, educational leave, or caregiving leave:** The goal is to facilitate quick reintegration into the work process and to prevent disadvantages resulting from such events (IHS, 2023).

**Enable work-life balance through flexible home office and working time arrangements, as well as situation-specific caregiving options:** The aim is to create suitable frameworks tailored to individual needs, particularly for those with caregiving responsibilities.

**Existing agreements regarding home office** (according to the current home office policy) can be quickly and easily adjusted with the respective supervisors (institute and project management) and in consultation with HR in the event of unforeseen changes in caregiving responsibilities.

### 2.2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

**Ensuring Gender- and Diversity-Sensitive Recruitment and Selection Processes:** The aim is to maintain the proportion of women in all areas and roles, in particular in those that are traditionally dominated by male involvement. This is achieved by actively reaching out to qualified women and ensuring their participation at all stages of the recruitment process (IHS, 2023).

### 2.3. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

**Female leadership:** The Economica Institute has been established by a team of proponents in conformity with gender parity considerations which have been adhered

to throughout its existence with a maximum deviation of one voice in both directions, depending on the time period considered. The institute's top representative is its female president, Dr. Daniela Grozea-Helmenstein, MBA MA.

**Female spin-offs:** In the economics domain, two female-led institutes were newly established in Austria during the past decade. One of these two spin-offs was founded by a former board member of Economica.

**A transparent, gender- and diversity-sensitive agenda-setting:** All of the institute's management functions are performed by its own team members. This also includes setting the institute's research agenda, which is jointly defined and approved by *all* members of the Institute. It is revised periodically with the involvement of *all* members of the Institute in accordance with the principle of "one person, one voice". This approach ensures the participation of women at all stages.

#### 2.4. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

**Gender parity-oriented recruitment:** The institute has developed a gender- and diversity-sensitive process for vacancy-related communication and selection, based on gender-sensitive job descriptions, transparent and verifiable criteria for all recruitment steps (invitation, selection, and hiring), and an encouragement for a proactive seeking of qualified female candidates. The institute's recruitment process itself is truly outstanding: Applicants are supposed to conduct an application presentation with subsequent interview, subsequently a *collective* recruitment decision is taken by the entire team whether or not to hire a candidate. A hiring commitment is only made pursuant to the principle of "one person, one vote" in tandem with a unanimous decision of the entire team, not by a majority vote.

**Support for female scientists in establishing expert status:** The goal is to promote qualified women in taking on project leadership roles and to increase their visibility in representing the institute in academic, policy-making and media-related contexts (IHS, 2023).



**Support for women in their doctoral research:** The aim is to assist promising young female scientists by aiding them in finding a PhD positions and provide them with professional coaching and/or mentoring.

**Supporting women in their professional development:** Internal and external training activities (workshops, seminars, individual training sessions) are accessible to all staff members, inter alia empowering women to overcome barriers in academic research as well as in policy consulting.

**Promotion of women in the external representation of the institute through targeted empowerment and provision of resources:** To maintain the proportion of women in the external representation of the institute, female scientists are systematically nominated as project leader and encouraged to present study findings both internally and externally. All staff members are supported to professionalize their media appearance through peer-training and feedback procedures (IHS, 2023).

**Symmetry in salary classifications and salary advances:** Geared towards fair remuneration, salaries are identical for all staff members taking into account academic achievement, years of experience, and the level of responsibility. Furthermore, the institute pursues an employee retention program on the basis of crypto assets with contributions of the same amount for all employees independent of gender, age, academic background or other criteria.

**Mitigating the gender pension gap:** All employees are offered the possibility to continue their regular employment with the institute beyond the earliest possible retirement age in accordance with individual needs. This affects female staff members in Austria in particular since their statutory retirement age will not be fully equalized with that of male employees until 2033.

## 2.5. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

**Gender-Sensitive Data Analysis:** We apply gender-sensitive methods to the evaluation of data, ensuring that research findings reflect gender-specific trends and disparities. This includes analyzing data separately for different genders and examining how gender influences various outcomes. For instance, we regularly

conduct lifetime earnings comparisons between traditionally female-dominated professions (e.g., hairdressers) and male-dominated professions (e.g., IT technicians) to highlight gender-based economic differences.

**Focus on Gender-Relevant Topics:** Research projects are designed to address gender-specific issues and themes. We prioritize topics that are pertinent to understanding the experiences and challenges faced by different genders. To illustrate, we studied the representation and impact of women in leadership positions in Austria to understand barriers and opportunities for female leaders in the country.

**Organizing Gender-Focused Events:** Hosting and sponsoring events such as Women's Runs and Daughters' Days to promote female engagement. These events aim to inspire and motivate female staff members of Economica as well as external women and girls to pursue careers in economics by providing them with role models, networking opportunities, and exposure to potential career paths.

## 2.6. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

**Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination:** The goal is to prevent all forms of demeaning behavior, including sexual or gender-based harassment, as well as discrimination based on diversity characteristics such as gender, age, or origin.

**To create a discrimination-free and respectful working environment, a Code of Conduct has been developed.** This code defines the values that all members of the institute are expected to uphold and adhere to. The behavioral and leadership principles based on these values aim to ensure transparent, constructive, and trustful collaboration, as well as a respectful organizational culture. The values outlined in the Code of Conduct address not only equality, anti-discrimination, and recognition of diversity but also issues such as sustainability and ethics.

# 3. Data Collection and Monitoring

## 3.1. Quantitative Indicators

- Employee Distribution: Percentage of male and female employees across different job types and salary grades.
- Application and Recruitment: Ratio of female applicants to the number of recruited female employees.
- Absence of Gender Pay Gap: Numerical calculation of a potential gender pay gap (positive/negative delta), both in percentage and euro terms.
- Absence of Discrimination and Harassment: Number of reported cases.
- Parental Leave: Utilization of parental leave by male and female employees.

## 3.2. Qualitative Indicators

- Policy Analysis: Evaluation of institutional policies and standards for recruitment, selection, and career progression to ensure alignment with Austrian and EU legal and normative provisions.
- Employee Survey: Results from biennial anonymous surveys on working conditions, professional development, organizational culture, work-life balance, mental and social wellbeing, and feedback on the GEP.
- Training Feedback: Short opinion polls to gather employee feedback on gender equality information, dissemination activities, and training sessions conducted by Economica.



## 4. Gender Equality Committee (GEC)

The Economica Gender Equality Committee (GEC) oversees the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP). The GEC will provide concise annual assessments, propose revisions, and suggest amendments to enhance the plan's effectiveness and relevance. The GEC is elected for a 3-year term.

### **Composition and Leadership:**

- Size: The GEC will include one member per 10 employees, with a minimum of three members.
- Leadership: The GEC will be co-chaired by one female and one male chair.
- Meetings: The GEC will meet at least twice a year, either electronically or in person.

### **Responsibilities**

**Monitoring and Reporting:** The GEC will address issues related to gender equality, promote and advance women, oversee GEP implementation, and assess its impact.

**Annual Calendar:** The GEC will publish an annual calendar of gender equality activities, including those organized by Economica. Employees will be encouraged to attend these events, with travel and registration costs covered by Economica if appropriate.

**Recruitment Support:** A GEC representative will assist in the recruitment process by participating in assessments and advising on selection decisions.

**Information Service:** The GEC will provide information to employees about their rights and responsibilities concerning gender equality. It will handle inquiries,

complaints, and suggestions, whether signed or anonymous. Justified suspicions of discrimination will be reported to Economica's Board for appropriate action.

**External Liaison:** The GEC will coordinate with the Working Group on Equal Opportunities at the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research<sup>6</sup> for updates on gender equality information and normative documents and may seek advice on specific issues.

The GEC aims to foster a fair and equitable work environment and ensure continuous improvement in gender equality practices at Economica.

## 5. Duration and Annual Revisions

Date	Activity	Responsible unit
August 2024	GEP version of 2024 discussion and approval	All team members
	Publication of GEP version 2024 on Economica homepage upon approval	Board members
October 2024	Election of GEC	Board members in collaboration with all team members

<sup>6</sup><https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Ministerium/Gleichbehandlung/Arbeitsgruppe-für-Gleichbehandlungsfragen.html>

	Dissemination of information on GEC committee members' names, contact details and their functions	Board members
	Semi-annual meeting of GEC	GEC
November 2024	Information session and training for staff	GEC
December 2024	Annual monitoring: indicators data collection and survey of staff	Board members, GEC
April 2025	GEC team attending training for gender equality officers in Austria	GEC
April 2025	Semi-annual meeting of the GEC	GEC
July 2025	Revision of GEP	GEC
August 2024	GEP version of 2025 discussion and approval	All team members
	Publication of GEP version 2025 on Economica homepage upon approval	Board members



## 6. Resources and Budget

The Economica Board will provide adequate budgetary support for the implementation of the GEP. All activities are funded from Economica's own resources. Approved activities will be free for attendance to all employees.

## 7. Bibliography

ICSR. (2022). *Institutional Action Plan For Gender Equality*. Wien: Institut für vergleichende Umfrageforschung.

IHS. (2023). *IHS Richtlinie: Gleichstellungsplan 2023*. Wien: Institut für Höhere Studien.



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