



Lagging behind or refusing for a good reason? Gender equality measures in Central and Eastern European higher education and research institutions

Marta Warat, Ewa Krzaklewska, Paulina Sekuła,

ESPAnet, 3rd September, 2020



JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY
IN KRAKÓW



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 788204



About the ACT Project

- “Communities of PrACTice for Accelerating Gender Equality and Institutional Change in Research and Innovation across Europe” (<https://act-on-gender.eu/>)
- May 2018 - April 2021
- Horizon 2020 project (agreement no 788204) that involves universities, research centres and research funding organisations
- ACT seeks to advance gender equality at universities, research centres and research funding organisations by facilitating collaboration between experienced institutions in the implementation of gender equality plans with less experienced ones



Objectives of the ACT survey

1. To get information about the status quo of gender equality implementation activities;
2. To map actors – practitioners and experts - involved in advancing gender equality and their network of collaboration partners;
3. To identify the expertise and support needed to overcome barriers faced by the organisation;
4. To identify potential CoP members.



Methodology

- Online survey: 27.11.2018-17.02.2019
- Snowball sampling through the ACT consortium partners and their contacts; the consortium leaders of the structural change projects funded in FP7 and Horizon 2020; delegates of the ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in R&I
- The survey could have been filled out for the entire organisation or an individual department or institute
- Multiple responses from the same organisation were possible
- 265 survey responses from 192 organisations from 36 different countries (91% EU28)



Sample characteristics - Who participated?

- 82 survey responses from 11 CEE countries (mainly from Poland, Slovenia and Bulgaria)
- 48 respondents – departmental level, 34 respondents-organisational level
- Mostly from higher education institutions (64) and public research institutes (11)
- Respondents mostly involved in integrating a gender dimension into research and/or teaching as an individual effort (48) but also in institutional efforts (27)
- 53 researchers, 29 leaders/managers, 12 GE representatives (e.g. Ombudsperson)



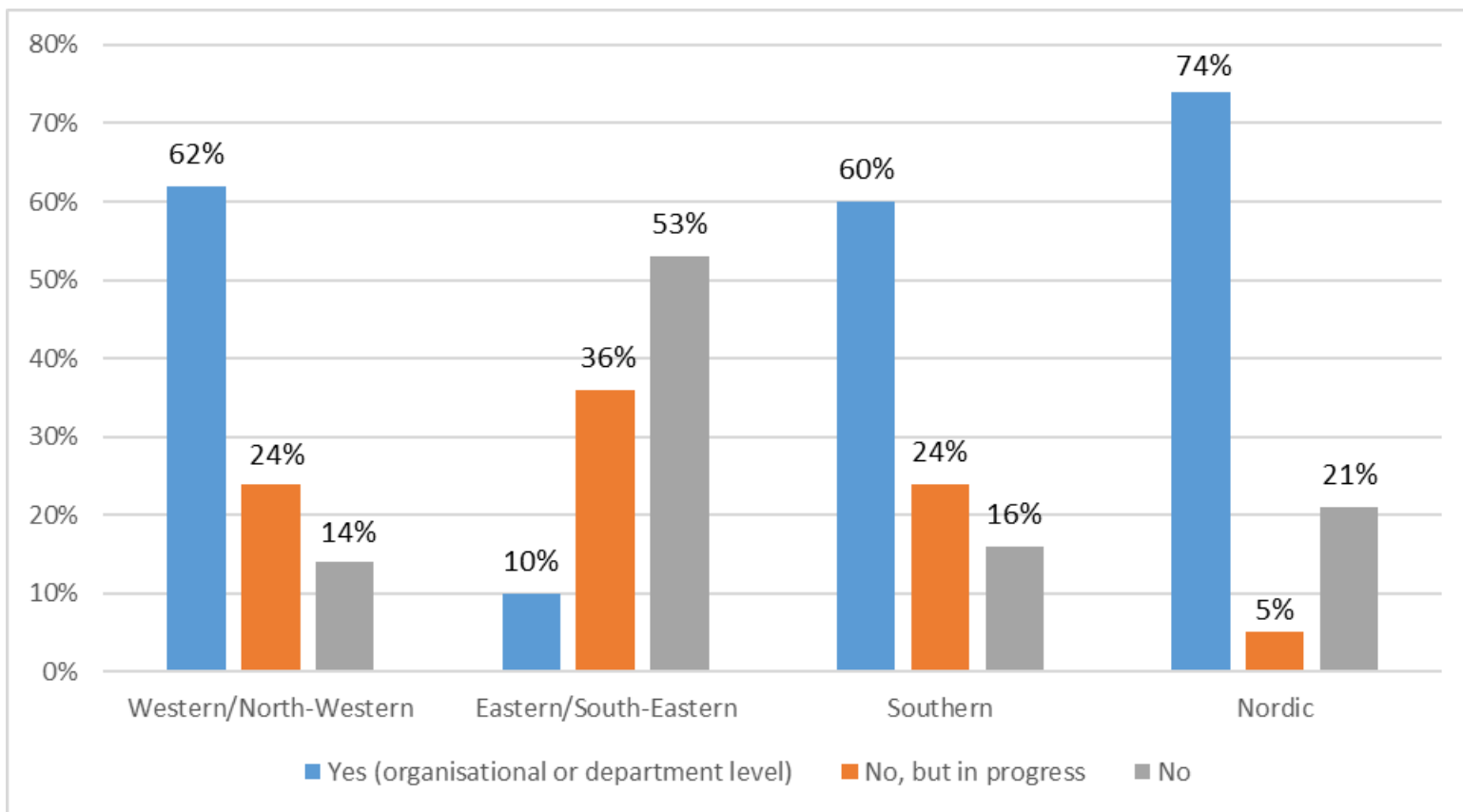
Feminist institutionalism

- Institutions are gendered (Acker 1990, Connell 2002, Mackey et.al. 2010).
- Individual and institutional conditions affecting the implementation of GE actions:
 - Interest in factors contributing to institutional change through institutions, movements and policies.
 - Importance of strategic agency to provide institutional change; role of actors to initiate change.
 - Role of constraints (e.g.resistance) and opportunities to institutional change (Mackay et.al. 2010; Mergaert, Lombardo 2014; Clavero, Galligan 2020)
- Institutions as battlegrounds of norms, values, conflicting interests; importance of institutional context (Clavero, Galligan 2020).
- Focused on formal and informal institutional rules, norms and practices (Waylen 2014).



GEP implementation - regional differences

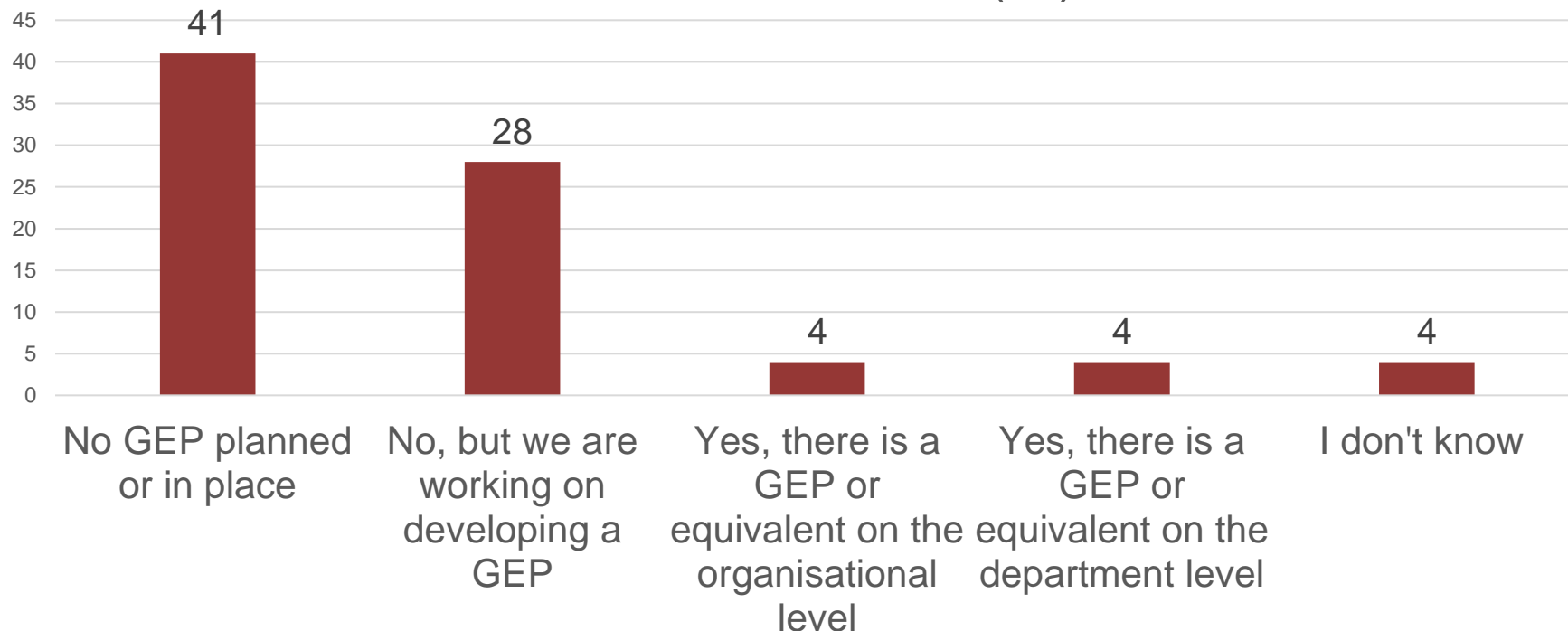
- Only 10% of respondents from Eastern/South-Eastern European countries report a GEP in their institution
- In all other regions of Europe, it is between 60-74%
- Observed GEP initiative in the region





Potential for GEP development

GEP development in CEE countries (%)



Most respondents see progress in relation to gender equality at their organisations (45%), 30% regress or stagnation, 25% cannot assess it



Importance of insitutionalisation of GE policies

General belief that **GEPs are important** to introduce (72%)

Efforts to implement GEPs (28 respondents):

- Discussing the needs of the institution/employees in terms of gender equality (16 indications)
- Informal/formal talks with management (16)
- Informal/formal talks with other stakeholders (15)
- Diagnosis of situation regarding GE (12)
- Draft of GEP (5)
- Commission responsible for developing GEP (5)
- Setting up an informal/formal committee (5)

International cooperation in relation to GE measures development:

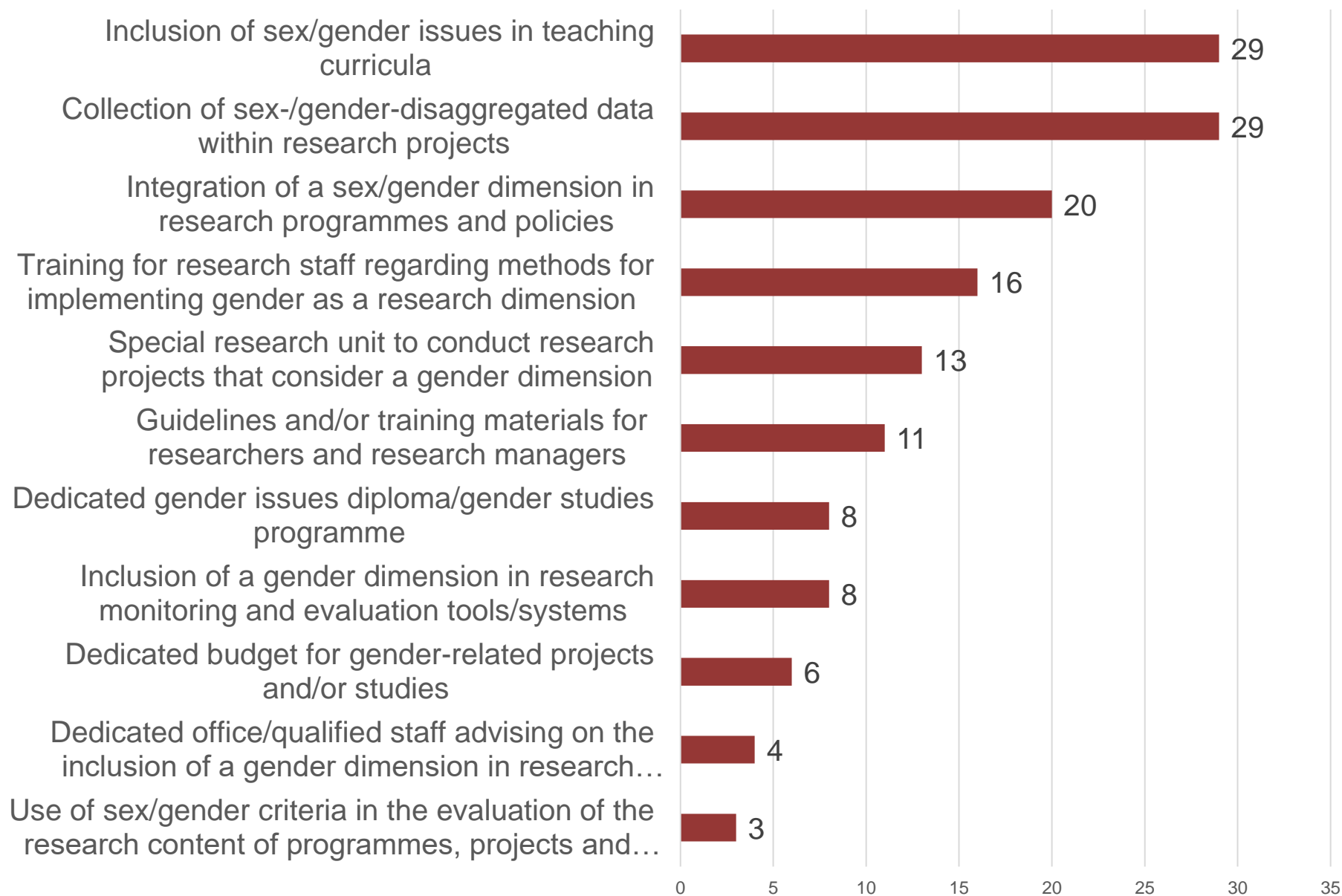
- Participation in EU projects in relations to GE (21 respondents)
- Cooperation in at least one project to implement gender equality measures (25 indications)
- GE cooperation: Cooperation in an international/national network/association, in which gender equality is a main focus (16)



GE measures at institutions

- The „GEP promise” - measures exist in institutions with GEPs
- The GEPs have a varying number of measures (up to 13)
- Most common measures:
 - Enhancing women’s promotion (6 indications)
 - Enhancing women’s visibility (6)
 - Collection of sex-/gender-disaggregated data (5)
 - Awareness raising measures (4)
 - Measures addressing non-discrimination and gender diversity (5)
 - Promoting equal representation in decision making (4)
 - Measures combating sexual harassment (4)
 - Measures addressing the integration of a gender dimension into research (4)

Activities in relation to gender dimension in research and teaching (implemented at least once)



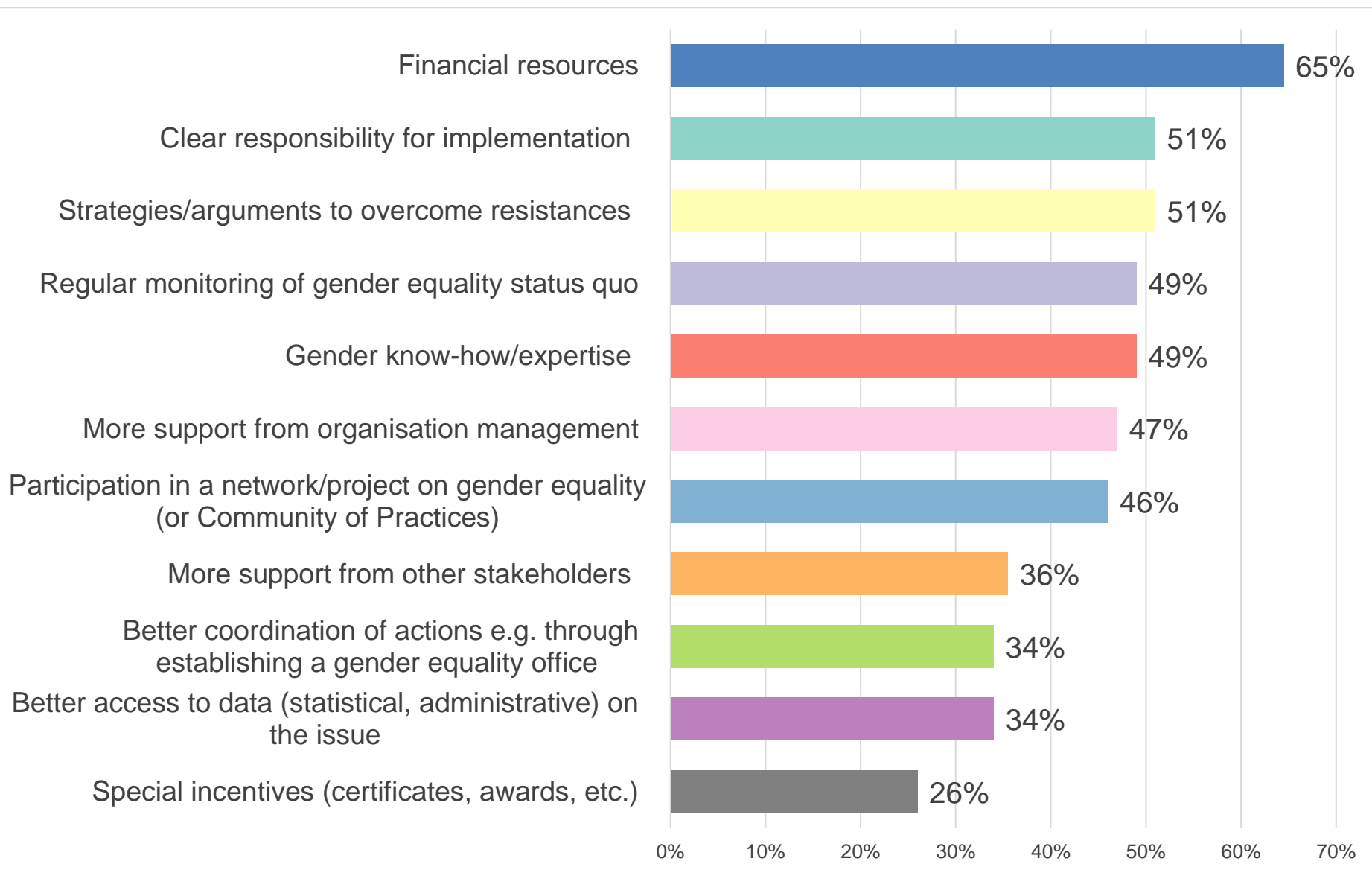


Barriers to implementing GE measures



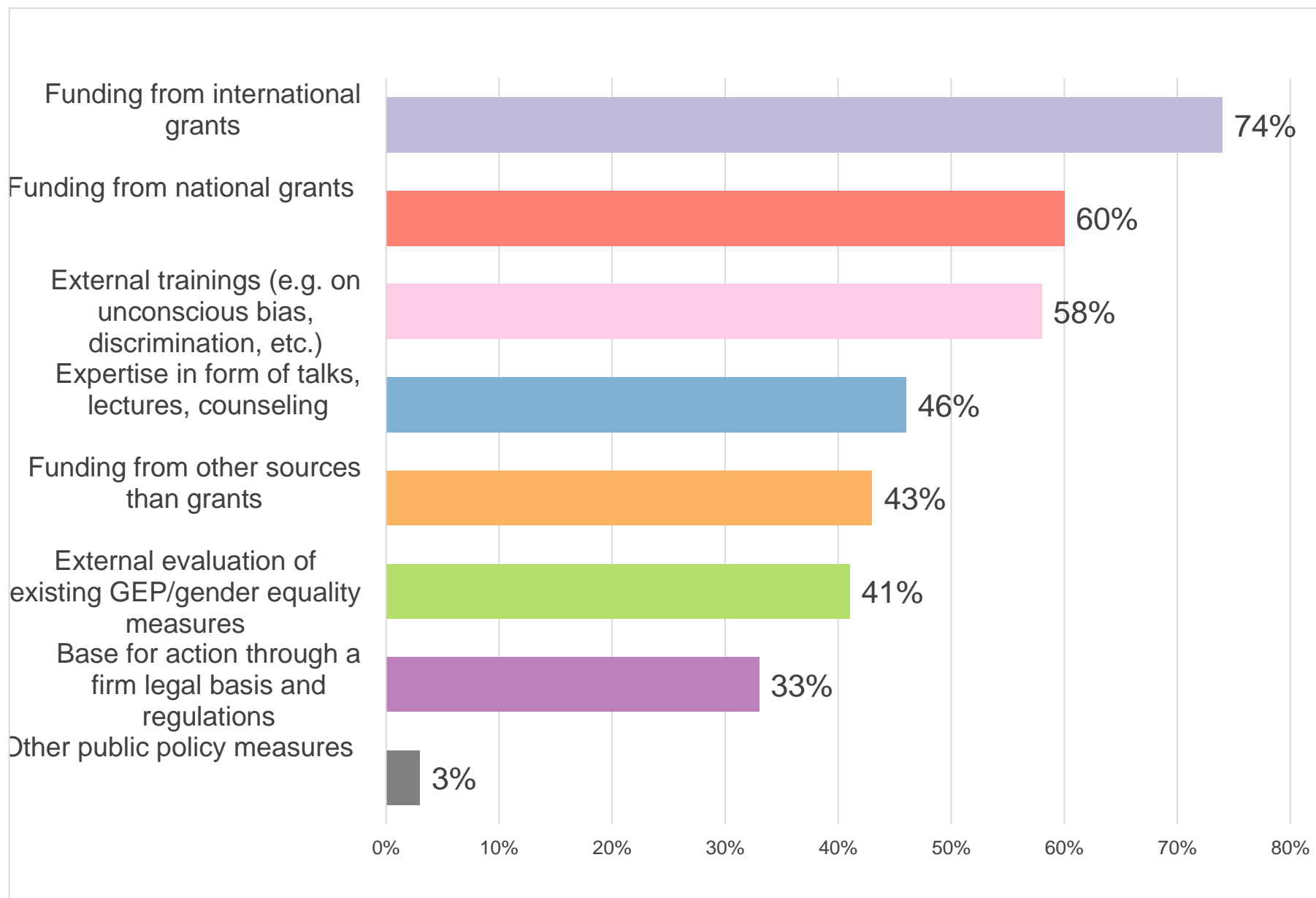


Internal factors needed to improve GE





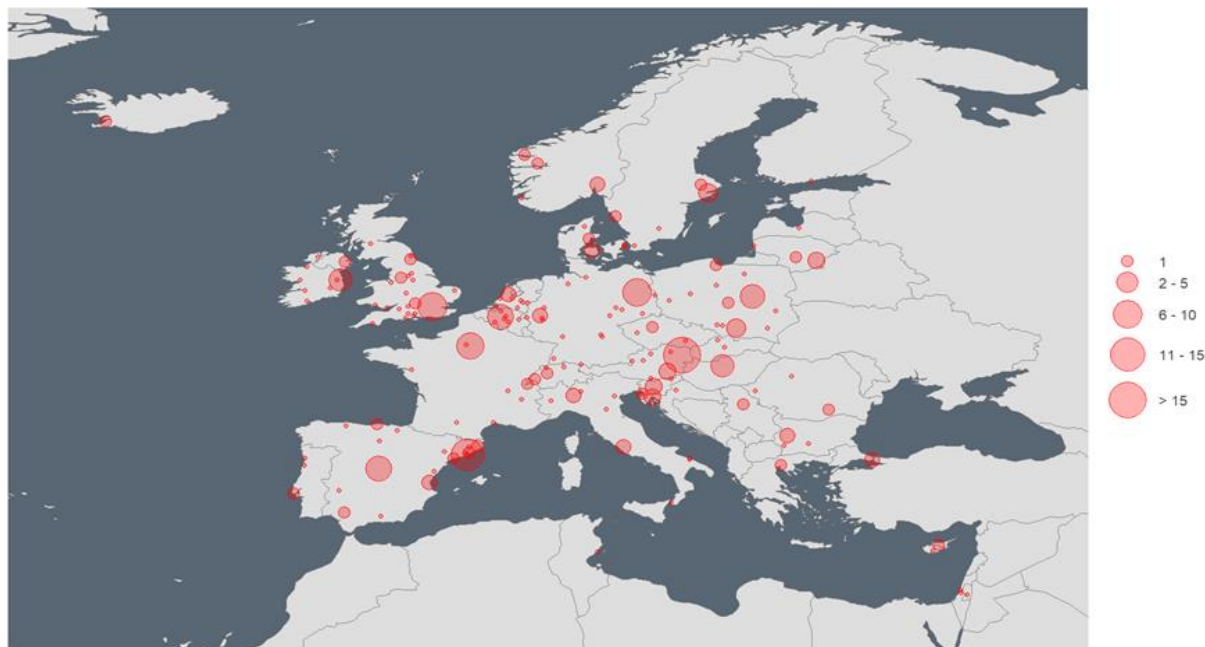
External support needed to improve GE



Named partners in and around Europe

Number of distinct organisations (survey responses) and their named partners:

- CEE region: Balkan countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia are completely disconnected
- Also Baltic States are underrepresented: no response or named partner from Estonia
- Poland highly represented through efforts from the ACT consortium

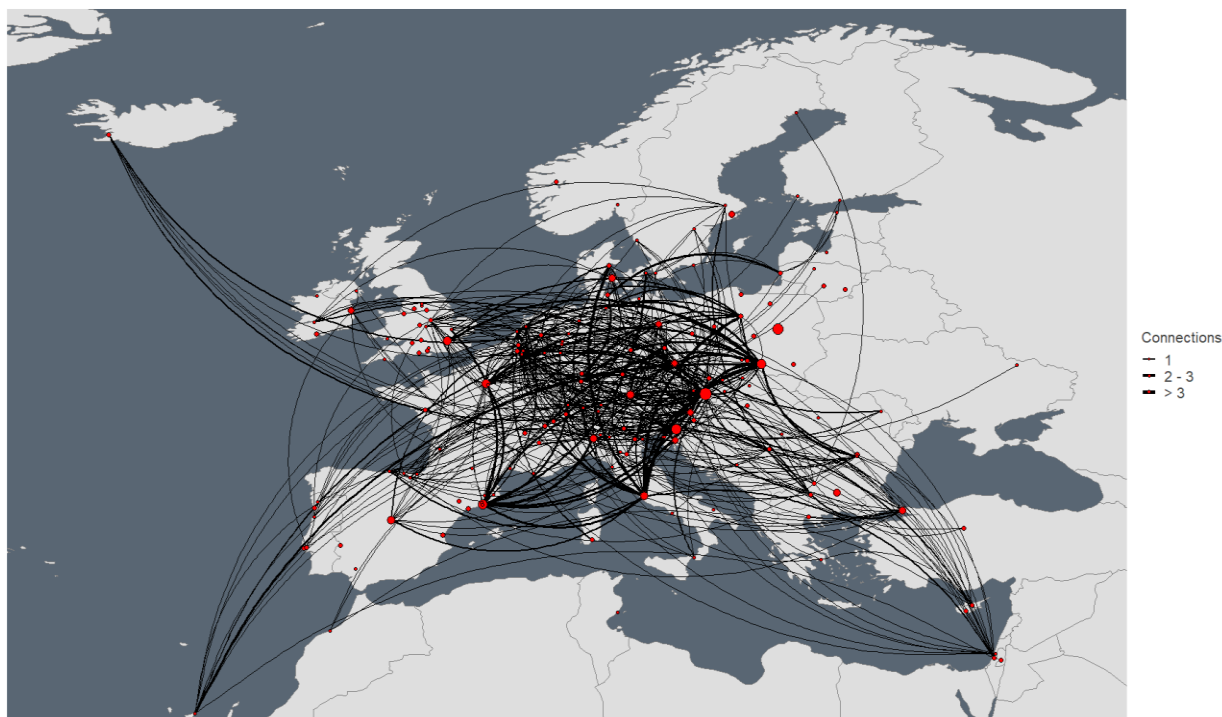


Number of distinct organisations and named partners in cities in and around Europe (n = 334). Analysis carried out by Sybille Reidl and Lisa Schön, JOANNEUM RESEARCH.

Source: Community Mapping Report: Cooperation, Barriers and Progress in Advancing Gender Equality in Research Organisations, available online: <https://act-on-gender.eu/community-mapping>

Project partners in and around Europe

- 60 respondents selected at least one project
- Projects not isolated but form an international community
- Most central actors: Austria, Italy, Poland and Spain
- Again some of the South-Eastern European countries are entirely disconnected, such as Montenegro and Macedonia.



Project partner network on the European map (n = 368). Analysis carried out by Sybille Reidl and Lisa Schön, JOANNEUM RESEARCH.
 Source: Community Mapping Report: Cooperation, Barriers and Progress in Advancing Gender Equality in Research Organisations, available online: <https://act-on-gender.eu/community-mapping>



Constraints: Marginal institutional change regarding gender policy initiatives

- Weak institutionalisation and slow progress towards GE.
- Importance of structural (lack of financial, personnel and time resources) and procedural (lack of commitment from managers, unclear assignment of responsibilities, lack of coordination) constraints: lack of commitment vs implicit resistance.
- Insufficient gender knowledge/skills/competence.
- Governance factors (legal regulation, incentives) not seen as the major facilitator of GE measures.
- Cultural factors: weak explicit resistance towards implementation of GE, but lack of commitment from employees; Importance of strategies/arguments to overcome resistance.



Opportunities: Strategies for improving GE policies/solutions in HEI and RPO in CEE

- Internal change of institution: institutional transformation approach focused on removing structural and procedural barriers.
- Importance of the interplay between individual and institutional factors.
- Support from outside (financial and expertise and networking): integrating vs setting own agenda.
 - Importance of funding from international grants more important in CEE region compared to other regions.
 - External training less important in CEE region compared to other regions.

Literature

Acker, J. (1990) Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations, *Gender and Society*, 4 (2), 139-158.

Clavero, S. & Y., Galligan (2020) Analysing gender and institutional change in academia: evaluating the utility of feminist institutionalist approaches, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, DOI: [10.1080/1360080X.2020.1733736](https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2020.1733736).

Connell, R.W. (2002) *Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mackay, F., Kenny, M., & L. Chappell (2010). New Institutionalism Through a Gender Lens: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism, *International Political Science Review*, 31(5), 573–588.

Mergaert, L. & E. Lombardo (2014) 'Resistance to implementing gender mainstreaming in EU research policy', in: Weiner, Elaine and Heather MacRae (eds): 'The persistent invisibility of gender in EU policy' *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)*, Special issue 1, 18 (5), 1-21.

Waylen, G. (2014) Informal Institutions, Institutional Change, and Gender Equality, *Political Research Quarterly*, 67 (1), 212–223.



Thank you for your attention!

marta.warat@uj.edu.pl

ewa.krzaklewska@uj.edu.pl

paulina.sekula@uj.edu.pl

Web: act-on-gender.eu

Twitter: [@ACTonGender](https://twitter.com/ACTonGender)