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# **The role of excellence in a reflexive approach to gender equality**

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# Agenda

- **Paradox in Austrian Gender Equality Policy**
- **Gender Equality Policies in the university sector**
- **Recent developments - success stories?**
- **Reasons for the paradox ...**
- **... and how to address it**



# Paradox in Austrian Gender equality policy

- **Agreed concept on political level**
  - Participation of women in teams (fixing the number of women)
  - Reduction of structural barriers for women / female careers (fixing the organisation)
  - Integration of gender in research content (fixing the content)
- **Comprehensive and well implemented policy mix**
  - Successful programmes with a long tradition
  - Sound legal foundation (university sector)
  - Tradition of evaluation
- **Slow progress due to ...**
  - Selective focus of policies
  - “pro-forma” implementation
  - Contradictions between ideal of “good science” and equality goals



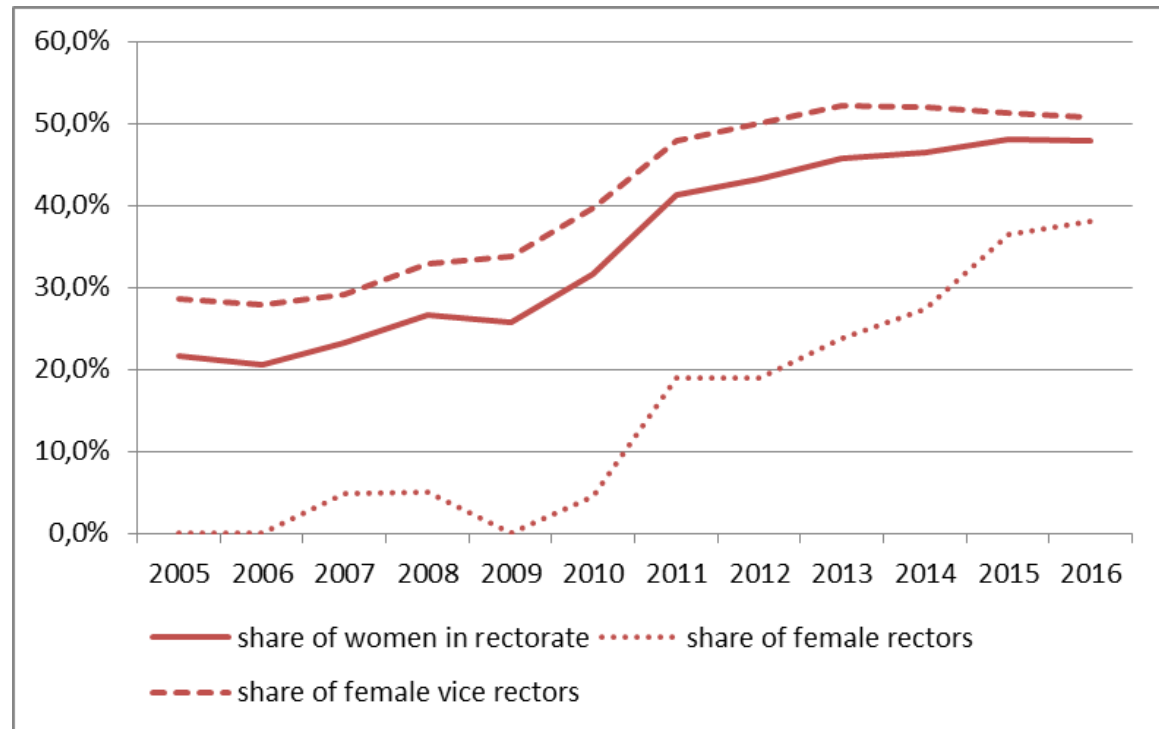
# University sector

- **Long tradition of equality polices**
- **Comprehensive policy mix developed by turn of the century**
- **Austrian Universities Act (UG 2002)**
  - Changing role of Federal Ministry
  - Universities responsible
  - Idea of „targeted policy mix“
  - Sound legal foundation
- **Additional targeted programmes**
  - Career development programmes for excellent female scientists (FWF)
  - excellentia
  - Awards etc. to increase visibility of women / gender studies (e.g. Gabriele Possaner Staats- und Förderpreise)
- **Gender equality monitoring**



# Recent developments ... success stories?

- Increasing share of professors
- Increasing female participation in decision making (quota)
- Moderate increase in share of female researchers in SET
- But persistent gender segregation in study choice
- ...



# Reasons for the paradox

- **Roots in tradition of gender equality policy**
  - Requirement of Federal Ministry → administrative task to show adherence to rules
  - Something “in addition” – additional positions, extra money ...
    - The rationale behind policies and programmes got lost.
- **Lack of gender equality discourse**
- **Implementation of policies top down**
  - Management by objective
  - Monitoring
  - But only in exceptional cases discussion of results embedded in a gender equality discourse
- **Lack of reflection and reflexivity at institutional and individual level**



# Reflexivity

## ▪ Elements of reflexivity

- Reflection of traditional practices from a gender perspective
- Recognition of structural inequality
- Assumed responsibility
- Development of alternative practice
- Implementation against resistance

## ▪ Preconditions for a cultural change

- Everybodies responsibility
- Link to discipline
- Gender equality has to become part of the definition of „good science“

➔ **Make effective use of policies with a potential to initiative reflexivity**

➔ **Need for more policies to initiative reflexivity**



**Thank you for your attention!**