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It is my pleasure to introduce the second edition of The Project Repository Journal with a focus on projects supporting gender equality in research and innovation (R&I).

For quite a while now, women are over-represented among students and according to the recently published SHE Figures 2018, 48% of all doctoral graduates are female. Despite this positive development, women are under-represented among researchers (33% of researchers are women), and the share of women in top positions in academia remains low. Only 24% of professors (Grade A) and 22% of heads of higher education institutions are women. Not only the glass ceiling phenomenon but also the vertical gender segregation remains persistent. Women are still under-represented in STEM fields but dominate, for instance, in education.

Already this brief empirical evidence clearly indicates a need for action to combat this loss of talent which is crucial for a knowledge based economy and society. Consequently, the European Research Area defines gender equality as one of its priorities. Gender equality policy in R&I pursues three objectives simultaneously:

- equal access for women and men to all areas and hierarchical levels in science and research
- removal of structural barriers to the careers of women and an increase in the percentage of women involved in decision making processes
- integration of the gender dimension in research content and teaching.

Hence gender equality is more than just promoting women in R&I. Additionally and even more important gender equality requires a structural and cultural change in Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) as well as Research Funding Organisations (RFOs).

This issue gives an insight in different approaches funded by the European Commission to support gender equality in R&I. The H2020 projects GEARINGROLES – 6 gender equality plan, SAGE – Systemic Action for Gender Equality and TARGET – Taking a Reflexive approach to Gender Equality for institutional Transformation represent structural change projects which aim at supporting Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) as well as Research Funding Organisation (RFOs) in developing and implementing gender equality plans. Furthermore the issue presents two research projects which focus on gender in research content: AgedLGBT is a research project with a focus on housing concerns of the aging LGBT+ community and the GRACE project which systematically investigates the cultural production of gender equalities within Europe. Additionally the issue emphasizes the relevance of structures for gender equality and presents the Women's Engineering Society (WES) which celebrates its 100 year anniversary as well as the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

References:

European Commission (2019), SHE Figures 2018
Brussels available online:
<https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9540ffa1-4478-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-98975693>

