



Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Combating Harassment on the Job for 2024-2028 period

Institute of National Economy (INE)

(Document endorsed legally and approved by the Scientific Council of INE, after wide consultation with the researchers within INE)

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Abbreviations and definitions

INE	Institute of National Economy
EG	Gender equality
SEGCH	Strategy regarding gender equality and combating harassment on the job/Strategy
PAEGCH	Action Plan regarding gender equality and combating harassment on the job/Action Plan
Sex	The entirety of morphological and physiological characteristics differentiating animals and plants into two distinct categories, male and female. (https://dexonline.ro/definitie/sex) Any of the two major forms of individuals emerging in the case of several species and that are distinguished as female or male, especially based on their reproduction organs and structures (https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/)
Gender	Behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits associated usually with a single sex (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary)
Sex vs Gender	Usually, a clear delimitation is used between sex and gender, the sex being the term of preference for biological forms, and the gender limited to its significances that involve behavioural, cultural, and psychological traits. Within this dichotomy, the terms male and female refer only to biological forms (sex), while the terms male/masculinity, female/feminine woman/girl and man/boy refer just to psychological and sociocultural traits (gender). (https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/)
EU	European Union

1. Introduction

The Institute of National Economy, hereinafter referred to as INE, is a public interest legal person institution subordinated to the Romanian Academy whose primary mission is to conduct fundamental and advanced research in the economic, social, and demographic fields using an intra-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary approach.

The Institute is accredited as a component entity of the national research-development-innovation system, according to H.G. No. 551/2004, by the A.N.C.S. decision No. 8673/17.06.2008.

As part of its mission, the institute conducts basic and applied studies and research in the area of national economy. These studies and researches are supported by the Scientific Research Programs of the Romanian Academy, which are approved by the General Assembly of the Romanian Academy and supported by the Department of Economic, Legal, and Sociological Sciences every year. The institute also works with other national and international RDI programs to help Romania's long-term growth.

The foundational and applied research underpinning the studies and analyses conducted at the institute is confined to themes pertinent to the scientific community, the business sector, and both central and local public authorities. This includes, but is not limited to, the formulation, refinement, modification, and examination of theories, models, and strategies aimed at promoting sustainable economic development in Romania within the context of the EU and the global landscape. INE carries out analyses concerning the macroeconomic and territorial effects of integration, globalization, crises, and business cycles; demographic and economic assessments; evaluations of human capital formation, utilization, and mobility; studies on the labor and education markets; public management, institutional efficacy, and regional economics; historical examinations of the national economy; theories related to crises and their management; assessments of foreign direct investments; risk management in crisis scenarios; evaluations of external and internal economic-financial imbalances; entrepreneurship; determinants of competitiveness, specialization, and international cooperation; budgetary and fiscal policies; social policies; energy transition; digital transition; dynamics of business models; and transformations in industrial relations, among others.

According to Law no. 202/2002 (updated as of 2024) on equal opportunities and treatment for women and men, with its subsequent amendments and additions, gender equality between women and men means taking into account the different capacities, needs, and aspirations of male and female individuals, and ensuring equal treatment for both. The Law

governs all initiatives aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and treatment for women and men, with the objective of eradicating all forms of sex-based discrimination throughout all areas of public life in Romania. Furthermore, this legislation includes provisions for penalizing direct and indirect harassment, as well as sexual harassment. Consequently, this plan will also encompass components pertaining to workplace harassment.

Harassment and sexual harassment violate the concept of equal treatment between men and women and constitute gender-based discrimination. These sorts of discrimination may occur not only in the workplace but also in relation to access to employment, professional training, and advancement opportunities. Harassment in the workplace is characterized as unwelcome conduct, including sexual behavior, that causes an individual to feel offended, embarrassed, or intimidated. This include scenarios when an individual is solicited to partake in sexual acts as a prerequisite for employment, along with circumstances that foster a hostile, intimidating, or degrading workplace atmosphere. Harassment may encompass one or more occurrences and/or actions classified as physical, verbal, or non-verbal harassment.

The Strategy for Gender Equality and Workplace Harassment Prevention (SEGCH) aims to achieve balance that fosters equity and social inclusion, thereby facilitating human development and promoting prosperity and fulfilment across all domains (professional, familial, societal, etc.) for both women and men.

SEGCH of INE considers, on one hand, the unique characteristics and activities conducted within the research departments, including the Centre of Researches for Sustainable Development and the administrative and logistical support departments (the Documentation Centre Romania-OECD and the INE Library), and on the other hand, the strategic directives established at both the national and European Union levels.

The Strategy for Gender Equality and Combating Harassment in the Workplace (SEGCH) and the Action Plan for Gender Equality and Combating Harassment (PAEGCH) serve as strategic instruments that reaffirm the values guiding the institute's operations while also providing proactive responses to challenges related to the adherence to gender equality principles across all institutional processes and practices.

The INE gender equality strategy was formulated in accordance with the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans, as well as the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. It also considers the execution of the national legal framework aligned with the current Strategy. Comparable initiatives from other research institutes and universities in Romania and the European region were considered, together with the Sustainable

Development Goals outlined in Agenda 2030. The aforementioned documents are located in the bibliographic references section.

The motivation for developing SEGCH was the one of turning INE into a safe space for all employees, where all activities are in compliance with the principles of equality, inclusion and non-discrimination.

Based on SEGCH, the Institute of National Economy has drafted the Action Plan regarding gender equality and combating harassment on the job for the period 2024-2028, based on concrete actions and measures, as well as on indicators for measuring the progress in implementation and for reviewing it.

By endorsing the realization of their goal and objectives, SEGCH and PAEGCH of the Institute of National Economy guarantees and advocates for equality and non-discrimination based on gender, thereby emphasizing the significance of unique professional competencies of all employees, regardless of gender. SEGCH's objectives are executed through targeted measures designed to safeguard an equitable and inclusive organizational culture while advancing gender equality at all levels. Consequently, SEGCH and PAEGCH will facilitate the proactive enhancement of awareness concerning gender equality, fostering equilibrium in researcher participation in decision-making, and ensuring transparent recruiting practices grounded in merit and robust professional qualifications. The objective is to incorporate the gender factor throughout the entire study process. Through this Strategy, INE underlines its steadfast commitment to uphold the rights of all employees, free from gender discrimination, a fundamental concept in a society founded on balance and mutual assistance.

By adopting and implementing SEGCH, INE undertakes to ensure a safe environment for all employees, without discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, social class, convictions, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, non-transmissible chronic disease, HIV contamination, belonging to a disfavoured category, or based on any other criterion that has as purpose or effect to restrict, or remove the acknowledgement, use or exercise of the human rights and fundamental freedoms, or of the rights safeguarded by law in the political, economic, social and cultural field, or in any other fields of public life, in conditions of equality.

Ensuring equality of chances and of treatment between women and men is fundamental, and any form of displaying power relationships between men and women is strictly prohibited, being regarded as a form of infringing human dignity, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

INE will enforce a zero-tolerance policy for harassment based on the gender criterion and moral harassment on the job, and will approach with due seriousness and promptitude all incidents and will investigate all harassment charges.

Within INE, disciplinary sanctions will be taken against any individual that was proved to have harassed another individual, and this may lead up to, and including firing from the job. The application of any disciplinary sanction shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Government Emergency Ordinance No. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code, as amended and supplemented, as well as with Law No. 53/2003 – the Labor Code, republished, with its subsequent amendments and additions.

At INE level, the management will ensure a safe environment for all employees, where all claims of harassment based on the gender criterion, and moral harassment on the job will be dealt with the required seriousness, promptitude and under conditions of confidentiality.

2. Regulation framework

1.1. National Legislation

- Resolution no. 970/2023 of Romania's Government for approving the Methodology regarding the prevention and combating of harassment based on the gender criterion, as well as of the moral harassment on the job;
- Law no. 202/2002 regarding the equality of chances and of treatment between women and men, as republished with subsequent amendments and alterations;
- Law no. 53/2003 – the Labour Code, as republished, with subsequent amendments and alterations;
- Law no. 286/2009 regarding the Criminal Code, with subsequent amendments and alterations;
- The Emergency Ordinance of the Government no. 57/2019 regarding the Administrative Code with subsequent amendments and alterations;
- Governmental Ordinance no. 137/2000 regarding prevention and sanctioning all forms of discrimination, as republished, with subsequent amendments and alterations;
- Governmental Resolution no. 262/2019 for approving the Methodological Norms for the Enforcement of Law no. 202/2002 regarding the equality of chances and of treatment between women and men;

- Law no. 125/2016 regarding Romania's adherence to the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity established by Resolution (89)14, adopted by the Ministers' Committee of the European Council on 16th November 1989, the continuation of which was ascertained by Resolution (93)51, adopted by the Ministers' Committee of the European Council on 21st October 1993;
- Law no. 66/2016 for amending and altering OUG 111/2010 regarding holiday and monthly compensation of children fostering;
- Law no. 22/2016 for declaring the day of *March 8th the Day of Women, and the day of November 19th, as the Day of men*;
- Law no. 23/2015 for declaring the day of *May 8th, the Day of equality of changes between women and men*;
- Emergency Ordinance no. 111/2010 regarding vacation and monthly indemnity for child fostering, with subsequent amendments and alterations;
- Law no. 62/2009 for approving the Emergency Ordinance of the Government no. 61/2008 for the implementation of the principle of the equality of treatment between men and women regarding access and supply of goods and services;
- OUG no. 67 from 27 June 2007 regarding the enforcement of the principle of the equality of treatment between men and women in the framework of professional social insurance schemes;
- OUG. no. 137/2000 regarding the prevention and sanctioning of all forms of discrimination, as republished with subsequent amendments and alterations;
- Law of paternal leave no. 210/1999, regulating the granting of paternal leave with the purpose of ensuring the effective participation of the father to caring for the new-born;
- Decree no. 342/1981 regarding the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), signed by the General Assembly of the United Nation and formulated by Resolution 34/180 from 18 December 1979, entered into force on 3 September 1981, in accordance with the provisions of art. 27(1), ratified by Romania on 7 January 1982.

1.2. European legal framework

- Directive 2000/78/EC of the Council from 27 November 2000 on creating a general framework in favour of the equality of treatment regarding the hiring and

labour force employment provides that harassment will be considered as a form of discrimination whenever undesirable behaviour is displayed, which has as purpose or effect of infringing the dignity of an individual, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment;

- Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council from 5 July 2006 on enforcing the principle of the equality of chances, and of the equality of treatment between men and women in the matter of employment and work (reform).
- The Strategy of the European Union regarding gender equality 2020-2025;
- The UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 (Agenda 2030) which provides at Goal no. 5: obtaining the equality of chances and of treatment between women and men and empowering all women and girls; the Declaration and Action Platform from Beijing (1995).
- Romania, in its capacity of member-state of the United Nations Organization (UN) and of the European Union, expressed its adherence to the 17 Goals of Sustainable Development (SDG) of the Agenda 2030, which was adopted by the Resolution of the General Assembly of the UN A/RES/70/1, in the framework of the Summit for Sustainable Development in September 2015. Goal number 5 of the Agenda 2030 refers to gender equality and has as targets: eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against all women and girls; eliminating all practices damaging to women; acknowledging unpaid care and household work by supplying public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and promoting shared responsibility in the household and in the family; ensuring the full and efficient participation of women and the equality of chances for employment in management positions at all levels of decision-making in the political, economic, and public life; ensuring universal access to health¹.

1.3. Internal provisions

- The Internal Regulation of INE;
- The Code of Conduct for the personnel within INE.

¹ <https://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/web/objective/odd5/>

1.4. Definitions and terms

The specific terms in the field of equality of chances and treatment between women and men are used in accordance with the definitions of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)². However, whenever it was deemed necessary, some terms are defined based on other bibliographic sources. The terminological approach establishes as general category the gender equality, and equality of chances and of treatment represent a component thereof. From the viewpoint of national legal provisions, the syntagm equality of chances and of treatment aims the entirety of laws, policies and strategies effective in Romania, and will be used as such.

The term **gender equality** is employed in the current Strategy whenever "relevant indicators and primary coordinates of the domains where disparities between women and men are documented" are considered (EIGE). EIGE defines gender equality as the equitable rights, responsibilities, and opportunities afforded to women and men, as well as girls and boys. In this context: "Gender equality does not imply that women and men will become identical, but rather that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not be contingent upon being born female or male." Gender equality entails the consideration of the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men, thereby recognizing the diversity among different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not solely a women's issue; it should equally engage and involve both men and women. Gender equality is considered a human rights concern and a criterion for progress and individual-centered democracy.

The equality of opportunities refers to the lack of explicit or implicit barriers in the way of economic, political and social participation on sex and gender-based criteria (EIGE). In this understanding: "Such barriers are oftentimes indirect, difficult to distinguish, caused and maintained by structural phenomena and social representations that proved particularly resistant to change. Equal chances as part of the set of goals on gender equality is based on the reasoning that there is necessary an entire series of strategies, actions and measures for redressing the deeply rooted and persistent inequality".

The equality of treatment refers to the context in which the direct or indirect discrimination on sex and gender criteria is non-existent, or to a less favourable treatment of women on grounds such as pregnancy and maternity (EIGE). In this understanding: "More favourable provisions for the protection of women regarding pregnancy and maternity, and

² European Institute for Gender Equality <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/overview>.

positive measures with the purpose of achieving substantial gender equality are not contrary to the principle of equal treatment.”

The gender pay gap refers to the difference in average gross hourly earnings between female and male employees (EIGE). According to the EIGE definition, the gender pay gap index refers to the difference in percentage between the average gross hourly earnings of men and women. When the index has a positive value, this indicates that the average gross hourly earnings of men are higher. If the index value is negative, it means that the income is higher for women than for men. In the European Union, official documents operate with the unadjusted gender pay gap index, as its calculation does not take into account all the factors that impact the gender pay gap³.

Gender-based violence: Law no. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men, republished, with subsequent amendments and additions, establishes that: *"gender-based violence means an act of violence directed against a woman or, as the case may be, a man, motivated by gender"*.

Regarding the specific typology of **sexual harassment**, according to the definition formulated by EIGE, it designates a specific form of gender-based violence that includes acts of unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the victim and of creating a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

3. Inclusion and equal opportunities within the Institute of National Economy

Within the INE, both women and men have equal opportunities to advance in their careers and, at the same time, have the same level of remuneration. In recent years, more and more women are working and obtaining higher qualifications, occupying more and more decision-making positions.

Over time, in order to organize conferences and develop scientific articles, the emphasis has been placed on collaborating with colleagues, regardless of gender, both from the country and abroad.

³ Eurostat, *Gender pay gap statistics. Statistics explained*, februarie 2020.

The following indicators have been selected within the Institute of National Economy, Romanian Academy, as relevant for the discussion on gender equality:

- The distribution of women and men among staff, both in the institute's leadership and within its departments;
- The distribution of women and men among staff across all levels and scientific degrees (including administrative/support staff);
- The number of employees who requested/benefited from parental leave, by gender, the period of leave and how many of them returned after leave.

Following the analysis carried out at the INE level, the following aspects are noted:

- Over three quarters of the employees are women;
- There is a higher proportion of women compared to men in leadership positions (see Chart 1). The exception is the Department of Economic Theory, Modeling and History of the National Economy, the share of women and men is equal;
- There is a higher proportion of women holding scientific degrees, both among Experienced Researchers (Scientific Researcher II and III) and among Junior or Less Experienced Researchers (Scientific Researcher and Assistant Scientific Researcher) (see Chart 2). The exception is the category of Scientific Researchers I, where the majority is represented by men;
- all administrative positions are occupied by women (Chart 2).

Chart 1. The distribution of INE employees by departments and gender

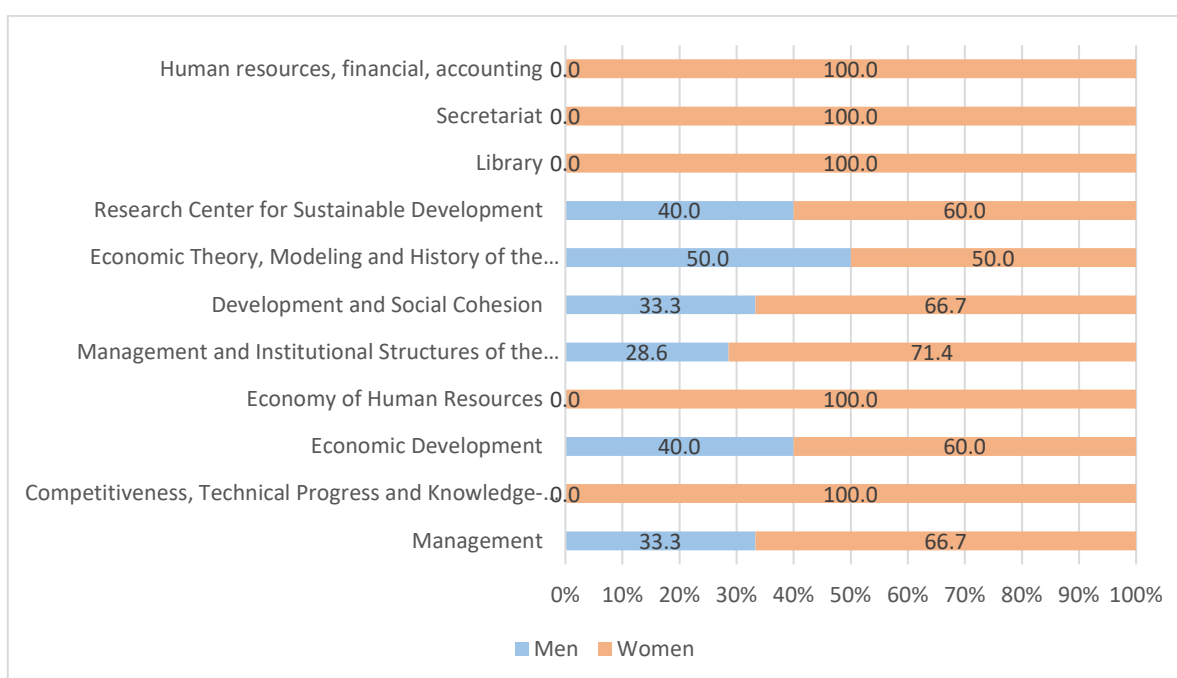
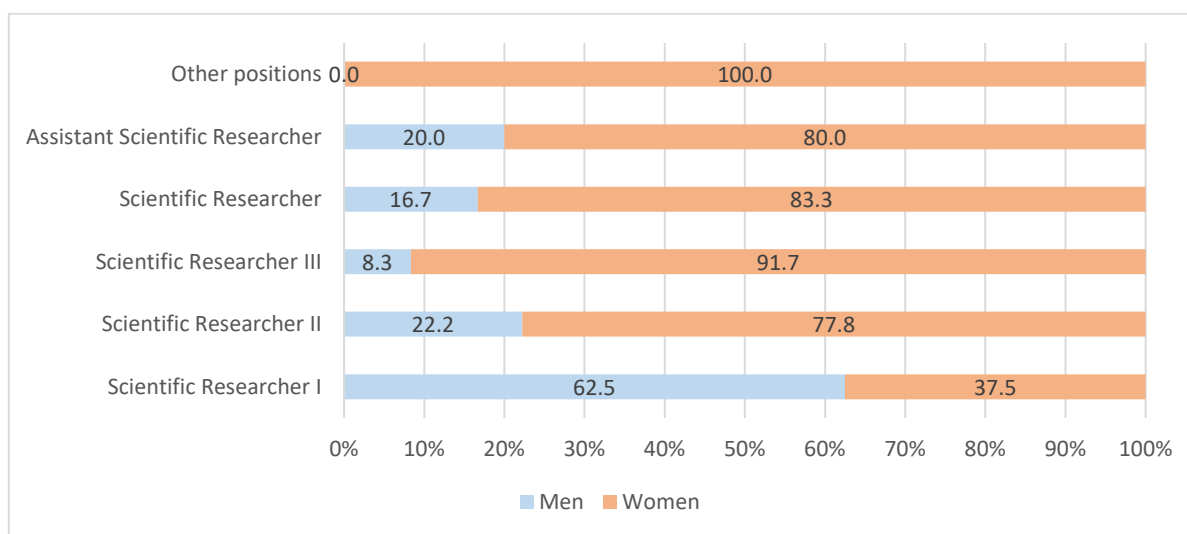


Chart 2. The distribution of INE employees by scientific degrees and gender



During the period 2019-2024, the situation of INE employees who requested/benefited from parental leave is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Situation of employees who requested/benefited from parental leave in the period 2019-2024, by gender

No. employees	Out of:		Duration of leave for children	No. Of employees that returned from child leave
	Females	Males		
4	4	0	-	2
	1		11.11.2019 – 10.11.2021 (two years)	1
	1		15.06.2022 – 19.07.2023 (one year and a month)	1
	1		04.11.2023 – 31.07.2025 (one year and eight months)	Not finished leave
	1		07.06.2024 – 24.02.2026 (one year and eight months)	Not finished leave

Within INE, four employees requested and entered parental leave during the period 2019-2024. The period of leave requested varies between one year and one month and two years. Of the four employees, two have completed their parental leave in full and returned to work, and for two other employees, parental leave is in progress.

The Institute is committed to continuing to apply the principle of eliminating any form of discrimination based on sex/gender among its employees in the coming period, as it has done so far.

4. Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality and Combating Harassment at Work

The Institute of National Economy proposes and endorses this Strategy on Gender and Workplace Harassment, along with the Action Plan for the period 2024-2028. By endorsing this Strategy and the corresponding Plan, the Institute has assigned certain employees/researchers within a working group the responsibility for these components. The Working Group will actively oversee the execution of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Combating Harassment, report any implementation challenges to the institute's administration, and consolidate ideas for enhancing the plan's effectiveness.

The Working Group will simultaneously endeavor to educate employees on the primary types and issues associated with workplace harassment and to identify tangible solutions to eradicate this phenomenon. This would provide genuine, effective assistance for potential victims, conveying a message of unity that victims do not confront workplace harassment (in its various forms) in isolation. To prevent and combat this discriminatory phenomenon, individuals must understand their rights and recognize that national legislation provides not merely "guarantees on paper," but also tangible avenues for victims to restore their compromised dignity or threatened careers.

The persons responsible for gender equality and combating harassment at work will follow general and specific legislative developments (national and European), plans and strategies of similar institutions, having the obligation to report to the INE management the necessary adjustments SEGCH/PAEGCH. The responsibility of the Working Group extends over a period of four years.

The Working Group becomes a stable structure within the INE. The election of the members of this Working Group is carried out by direct vote of the INE members (research staff and administrative staff), from among the INE employees (research staff and administrative staff) who have expressed their desire to be part of the group established for this purpose.

3.1. INE's Strategy for Gender Equality and Combating Harassment at Work for the Period 2024-2028

Within the INE, the Strategy for Gender Equality and Combating Harassment at Work for the period 2024-2028 targets several areas of intervention and objectives (Table 2).

Table 2. Intervention areas and objectives for the period 2024-2028

<i>Intervention area</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Work-life balance and promotion of organizational culture	Support in ensuring a balance between career and personal life and promoting gender equality in the institutional culture of INE
Gender equity in decision-making and leadership	Promoting gender equality in institutional processes and practices in leadership and decision-making processes within INE
Gender equality in recruitment and career development	Promoting gender equality in recruitment and career development of INE staff
Gender mainstreaming in research	Strengthening the gender perspective in the research process within INE
Measures against gender-based violence and harassment, including sexual harassment	Raising awareness of the importance of gender equality, mutual respect and defining boundaries and concepts

3.2. Action Plan on Gender Equality and Combating Harassment at Work

The Action Plan on Gender Equality and Combating Harassment at Work within the INE includes areas of intervention, objectives, key measures, target audience, timeline, responsible persons and indicators for measuring progress.

Table 3. Action plan for gender equality and combating harassment at work within the INE

<i>N o.</i>	<i>Intervention area</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Measures</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Staging</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Responsible persons</i>
1	Balanced work-life balance and promotion of organizational culture	Support in ensuring a balance between career and personal life Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture of INE	Use of electronic means to increase work flexibility Availability of flexible working time arrangements, from part-time to remote work	Implementation procedures Functional institutional structure created regarding gender equality and combating harassment at work within INE	2024 - 2028	Researchers and administrative staff	INE management Working group responsible for SEGCH
2	Gender equity in decision-making and leadership	Promoting gender equality in institutional processes and practices in	Review/revision of the internal promotion procedure within INE, so as to include the	Number of internal promotion procedure revisions INE employee database	2024-2028	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	INE Leadership Working Group Responsible for SEGCH

N o.	Intervention area	Objectives	Measures	Indicators	Staging	Target group	Responsible persons
		leadership and decision-making processes within INE	principle of gender equality Introduction of information on the number and age of children, parental leave (based on the agreement of the employees) into the INE employee database	supplemented with information on the number and age of children, parental leave and analysis of this data within the annual reports			
3	Gender equality in recruitment and career development	Promoting gender equality in the recruitment and career development of INE staff	Reexamining/revising the hiring procedure to include the principle of gender equality; job advertisements will avoid discriminatory wording	Number of reviews of the hiring procedure Employment announcement template developed, which is neutral in terms of potential gender discrimination New employees receive information on the gender equality culture in INE upon hiring and are informed about the Gender Equality and Anti-Harassment Strategy at the workplace	2024-2028	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	INE Leadership Working Group Responsible for SEGCH
4	Integrating the gender dimension into research	Strengthening the gender perspective in the research process within INE	Organizing internal debates on the use of a gender perspective in research activity	Number of participants	2024-2028	Researchers	INE Leadership Working Group Responsible for SEGCH
5	Measures against gender-based violence and harassment, including	Increasing awareness of the importance of gender equality, mutual respect, and defining	Organizing debates on the following topics: discrimination; violence; harassment (including sexual harassment)	Number of participants in the debates organized on discrimination; violence; harassment	2024-2028	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	INE Leadership Working Group Responsible for SEGCH

<i>N o.</i>	<i>Intervention area</i>	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Measures</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Staging</i>	<i>Target group</i>	<i>Responsible persons</i>
	sexual harassment	boundaries and concepts	Review of the INE Code of Ethics from the perspective of combating sexual discrimination, gender-based violence and harassment (including sexual harassment)	Report on the INE Code of Ethics from the perspective of gender discrimination, gender violence and harassment (including sexual)			

5. Monitoring and evaluation

The Plan on Gender Equality and Combating Workplace Harassment of the Institute of National Economy will be implemented during the period 2024-2028. The Strategy and the Plan will be implemented under the careful coordination of the Working Group, following discussions with the INE management, in order to ensure gender equality and combating any kind of harassment of employees at the institute level. Those responsible will work closely with management staff in order to identify and mobilize the necessary resources to achieve the objectives established by the plan.

The evaluation of the implementation of the PAEGCH will be carried out periodically, and monitoring will be permanently followed by its managers. The managers will periodically complete Finding Reports, which will be presented to the institute management. These reports will contribute to the periodic review of the Plan (if applicable).

The implementation will be carefully monitored by the designated managers, who will discuss any situations that may arise in the institute and within the Working Group. Following these discussions that will take place during the working meetings, if necessary, the measures and stages in which they will be taken will be established. Reports will be drawn up annually and will be distributed and debated in the institute. Only persons entitled by law will have access to the analysis of personal data.

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