

**Institute of Economic Sciences**

**Zmaj Jovina 12, 11000 Belgrade (Serbia)**



**GENDER EQUALITY PLAN OF THE INSTITUTE OF  
ECONOMIC SCIENCES FOR THE PERIOD 2021-2025**

## Table of Contents

Principles and Objectives of the Gender Equality Plan.....	1
Legal Framework.....	3
Analysis of the Gender Structure of the Workforce.....	5
Suggested Measures.....	7
Parental Leave.....	11
Suggested Measures.....	12
Prevention of Sexual/Gender Harassment.....	12
Suggested measures.....	13
Table Presentation of Planned Activities.....	14
Monitoring.....	15

## **Principles and Objectives of the Gender Equality Plan**

The Gender Equality Plan of the Institute of Economic Sciences for the Period 2021-2025 (in further reference GEP 25) is the fundamental strategic document of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade [*Institut ekonomskih nauka u Beogradu* – IEN] adopted to advance gender equality. By adopting and implementing the GEP 25, the IEN reaffirms its commitment to providing a comprehensive respect for basic human rights, as envisioned in international agreements, treaties and other related documents, related national legislation in the Republic of Serbia, and established positive practices.

The IEN is dedicated to promoting equality between women and men and prevention of discrimination in all its activities. The IEN understands the equality as an instrument for creation of the environment of equal opportunities, rights and obligations for everyone, regardless of gender. The main objective of the GEP 25 is to establish and promote such an atmosphere of respect for diversity in the workplace (and in general), while simultaneously eliminating any practices or structures that support inequality on any level, thus contributing to the quality of everyday life and work for all employees. The IEN is dedicated to correcting imbalances in the gender distribution between women and men in workplace, the decision-making structures, and working conditions at all levels, or among different professional groups and departments.

The GEP 25 also introduces the non-discriminatory gender sensitive language, as formulated by respective regulations in the Republic of Serbia in order to standardize and promote adequate use of gender and appropriate terms in regulations and communication. Terms used in this document have the following meaning:

- a) “gender” pertains to socially established roles, possibilities, behaviors, activities and attributes that the given society considers appropriate for women and men, including mutual relations between women and men and roles in these relations which are socially constructed depending on gender;
- b) “sex” represents biological characteristics on the basis of which people define themselves as women or men
- c) “vulnerable groups” are women from the countryside, victims of violence, as well as groups of persons who are in an unequal position due to social origin, nationality, property status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, mental and/or physical disability, life in an underdeveloped area or for any other reason or characteristic;
- d) “equal opportunities” imply equal exercise of the rights and freedoms of women and men, their equal treatment and participation in all stages of planning, preparation, deliberation and implementation and equal use of their results, without the existence of gender restrictions and gender discrimination;
- e) “gender perspective” refers to consideration of gender and sex differences, as well as different needs and priorities of women and men and their participation in all phases of planning, preparation, deliberation and implementation of policies, regulations, measures and activities.
- f) “gender balance” exists when the representation of one sex/gender is between 40-50 percent in relation to the other sex, and significantly unbalanced gender representation exists when the representation of one sex is lower than 40 percent in relation to the other sex, unless otherwise provided by a special law;

- g) “sexual/gender harassment” is any unwanted verbal, a non-verbal or physical act of a sexual nature that has as its object or effect the violation of personal dignity, and in particular if it creates fear, a hostile, intimidating, degrading or offensive environment;

## **Legal Framework**

Following suggestions of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) that “all stakeholders of a research organization or higher education institution are mobilized for developing and implementing a Gender Equality Plan”, the IEN had established a Working Group tasked to develop the GEP 25. The members of the Working Group were carefully selected to include representatives from all groups of employees, i.e., management, researchers and administrative professionals, while following the principles of balanced gender, age and career level representation.<sup>1</sup> In the process of drafting of the GEP 25, the IEN Working Group considered the existing legal framework in the Republic of Serbia, starting with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and positive legislation, i.e., the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination [*Закон о забрани дискриминације: 22/2009-3, 52/2021-4*] and the Law on Gender Equality [*Закон о родној равноправности: 52/2021-7*].

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia guarantees human rights envisaged in ratified international treaties, the generally accepted provisions of international law and legislation (Article 18, paragraph 1), provides for equality of men and women and the development of an

---

<sup>1</sup> The Working Group included the Director of the IEN, Deputy Director of the IEN, President of the Scientific Council, IEN Secretary and an early career researcher (Research Assistant), represented by three women and two men. The Working Group members are also holders of all scientific titles, which makes them suitable as representatives of different career level groups within the IEN.

equal opportunities policy (Article 15) and prohibits discrimination on any grounds, including gender-based discrimination (Article 21, paragraph 3). The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination (Article 20) prohibits “denial of rights or public or covert recognition of benefits in relation to sex, i.e. gender and gender identity or due to gender reassignment, i.e. adjustment of sex to gender identity, as well as due to pregnancy, maternity leave, childcare leave or special child care”, among other provisions. Article 14 of the Law envisages the application of special measures introduced to achieve full equality, protection, and progress for persons and/or groups of persons found in an unequal position. The Law on Gender Equality (Article 7) promotes the “equal opportunity policy”, which includes “1) equal participation of women and men in all stages of planning, preparation, adoption and implementation of decisions that affect the position of women; 2) taking into account the different interests, needs and priorities of women and men when making public and other policies and decisions on rights, obligations and law-based interests; 3) taking measures to ensure an equal starting point for realization of the principle of equal opportunities for persons, i.e. groups of persons who are in an unequal position on the basis of sex, sexual characteristics, i.e. gender, especially members of vulnerable social groups”.

These constitutional and legal provisions are supplemented by the IEN’s own codes and regulations, i.e., Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade [*Правилник о раду Института економских наука у Београду*] and the Work and Development Program of the Institute of Economic Sciences for the Period 2021-2025 [*Програм рада и развоја Института економских наука за период 2021-2025. – Strategy 25*]. These strategic and operational documents enable the effective implementation of positive legislation of the Republic of Serbia, define IEN’s main developmental strategies, and provide a general framework for formulation of policies designed to promote gender equality.

## **Analysis of the Gender Structure of the Workforce**

According to the data from August 2021, the IEN has a total of 46 employees, of which 41 Researchers in different stages of their respective careers, and 5 Administrative Professionals. The basic gender division of the entire workforce reveals a structure of 33 women (71.7 percent) and 13 men (28.3 percent). Among the Researchers, the gender division of the workforce follows the basic pattern, with 28 women (68.3 percent) and 13 men (31.7 percent). Among Administrative Professionals (Secretary, Executive Secretary, Accountant, Librarian, and IT administrator) all five employees are women. According to the established gender sensitive terminology, the basic overview of the gender structure of the IEN's workforce suggests a significantly unbalanced gender representation of men.

The gender structure of the IEN's management and administrative bodies follows the same basic pattern. The Steering Committee consists of 7 members, 4 men (57.1 percent) and 3 women (42.9 percent). The overall gender representation may be considered as balanced, although the IEN provides only 3 members of the Steering Committee, among which there are two women and one man. Within the given structure, it is evident that nominal lack of gender balance is unavoidable, but in this case, it is important to stress that the representation of female employees in the Steering Committee follows the basic gender structure of the IEN's workforce.

Similar situation is visible in the top management structures, where the Director of the IEN is a man, while the Deputy is a woman, although it is worthy to notice that all directors of the IEN since its establishment in 1958 were men. This seemingly supports the thesis of a traditional overrepresentation of men in the managerial structures, although such a statement requires some qualification. The IEN Collegium has 6 members (4 women and 2 men), the

Scientific Council has 15 members (10 women and 5 men), in both instances having two thirds (66.7 percent) of female members, again corresponding accurately to the overall gender structure of the workforce. It is important to emphasize that the President of the Scientific Council is also a woman.

The IEN has five Operational Centers (Center for Basic Research, Center for Consulting, Center for International Cooperation, Center for Digital Resources and Center for Strategic Cooperation), headed by 3 women (60 percent) and 2 men (40 percent). The only deviation from the identified pattern may be seen among coordinators of five Research Departments (Macroeconomics Department, Welfare Economics Department, Environmental Economics Department, Business Economics Department and Economic History and Theory Department), of which 4 are men (80 percent), and 1 is a woman (20 percent). On the other hand, it has to be emphasized that the function of the departmental coordinator is predominantly administrative, rather than managerial.

Considering the educational level of researchers and distribution of scientific titles<sup>2</sup>, the situation reveals an even greater misbalance in the representation of men. There are 30 senior researchers who hold the doctoral degree (73.2 percent of the total number of researchers), of which 20 are women (66.7 percent) and 10 are men (33.3). The situation is even less balanced considering the gender division among the highest scientific titles. The IEN has 4 researchers with the highest title of Principal Research Fellow, of which 3 are women (75 percent). Among Senior Research Associates, there are 5 researchers, all of which are women. The situation within the largest group of Research Associates is somewhat balanced, having a total of 21

---

<sup>2</sup> Scientific titles in the Republic of Serbia start with the Research Trainee [*Истраживач приправник*] and Research Assistant [*Истраживач сарадник*] (doctoral candidates). The first title for researchers who hold the doctoral degree is Research Associate [*Научни сарадник*], followed with Senior Research Associate [*Виши научни сарадник*] and Principal Research Fellow [*Научни саветник*] as the highest title. All titles are dependent on education, number and quality of scientific publications and work experience.



researchers (51.2 percent of all IEN researchers), of which 12 women (57.1 percent) and 9 men (42.9 percent). However, in the ranks of junior researchers (Research Trainees and Research Assistants; doctoral candidates), the gender misbalance in favor of women is the highest. Among 11 researchers, there are 8 women (72.7 percent) and 3 men (27.3).

It is evident that within the IEN's workforce there is a significantly unbalanced gender representation of men (less than 40 percent) within a majority of age and educational groups, as well as in managerial and administrative bodies. The gender representation of men is particularly unfavorable among the group of junior researchers, which may be the cause for further disturbances in the near future.

#### *Suggested Measures*

The balance between women and men should be improved in the category of the highest research positions (Senior Research Associates and Principal Research Fellows) and among the junior researchers (Research Trainees and Research Associates; doctoral candidates). In order to effectively implement policies and/or decisions to that effect, the first measure is to conduct annual screening of the gender structure of the IEN's employees in general, as well as in different professional groups, existing or newly established managing and research bodies and related organs (e.g., different permanent or temporary committees, commissions, working groups, etc.), which will be included in the IEN's Annual Work Plans. However, due to specificities of the existing legal framework and regulations for acquiring scientific titles in the Republic of Serbia, the IEN management has very limited possibilities to define effective short-term policies for establishing gender balance in targeted groups and in the period the GEP 25 is designed for.

According to the Code on Acquiring Research and Scientific Titles [*Правилник о стицању истраживачких и научних звања: 159/2020-82*] of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, a scientific title is acquired for the period of five years with the possibility of re-election without a limit on the number of re-elections.<sup>3</sup> Starting with the premise that the structure among the most senior research positions will not change dramatically in the period of the GEP 25 (due to regular or early retirements, job change or other extraordinary occasions), the only available tool and policy would be encouragement of the underrepresented gender (including vulnerable groups) in the adequate category to apply for the position, should such a job opening appear. The established gender balance in the most numerous group of Research Associates (51.2 percent of all IEN researchers) is expected to correct the gender balance among senior researchers once they start acquiring higher scientific titles in the near future. According to the analysis of the Working Group, it is expected that by 2024, six women and five men will acquire senior research titles, which constitute a balanced gender representation and which will significantly correct the existing unfavorable gender representation among senior researchers. However, it is also a fact that, according to standing laws and regulations, advancement to a higher scientific title is dependent on individual scientific production and overall performance, which is difficult or impossible to accurately predict, among other things also due to different gender perspectives of women and men.

The policy of encouragement of the underrepresented gender (including vulnerable groups) to apply for the position should be implemented in when employing junior researchers, where it is more likely to have both more applicants and job openings in the near future. This is particularly important and sensitive group, as the currently significant underrepresentation of

<sup>3</sup> The highest title of Principal Research Fellow is permanent.

men may cause destabilization of the currently well-balanced and most numerous group of Research Associates in the future. However, the implementation of this policy would necessarily produce overrepresentation of men among new employees in the period of duration of the GEP 25. Considering the existing legal frameworks and prevalent cultural standards and norms which are designed to promote employment of women as traditionally underrepresented in many professions and related managerial bodies, the reasons for implementation of the employment policies suggested by the GEP 25 should be openly and adequately communicated to all future job applicants, IEN employees, relevant state institutions and interested public.

An important formal obstacle to implementation of these policies is the IEN's Strategy 25, which anticipates reaching the number of 42 researchers by 2025. This suggests that for the period of duration of the GEP 25, there will be only one job opening for all categories of researchers. While this formally does not restrict IEN from exceeding this number, it is highly unlikely to expect that the number of new employees in the given period will be significantly higher. An additional obstacle is the IEN's obligation to strictly follow standing laws and regulations which treat this field, i.e., the Law on Public Service Employees [*Закон о запосленима у јавним службама: 113/2017, 95/2018, 86/2019, 157/2020*], Law on Budget System<sup>4</sup>, and Regulation on the Procedure for Obtaining Consent for New Employment and Additional Employment with Users of Public Funds<sup>5</sup>. Among other provisions, these laws and regulations proscribe that for the period between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2023, the rate of employment among users of public funds cannot exceed "70% of the total number of

---

<sup>4</sup> *Закон о буџетском систему: 54/2009-3, 73/2010-3, 101/2010-239, 101/2011-260, 93/2012-175, 62/2013-3, 63/2013-3 (исправка), 108/2013-3, 142/2014-190, 68/2015-22 (др. закон), 103/2015-151, 99/2016-160, 113/2017-3, 95/2018-223, 31/2019-5, 72/2019-185, 149/2020-278*

<sup>5</sup> *Уредба о поступку за прибављање сагласности за ново запошљавање и додатно радно ангажовање код корисника јавних средстава: 113/2013-8, 21/2014-5, 66/2014-4, 118/2014-3, 22/2015-12, 59/2015-3, 62/2019-21, 50/2020-3*

persons whose employment was terminated indefinitely on any basis in the previous calendar year” (Article 27k, Law on Budget System). Considering the fact that for the period of the duration of the GEP 25 only one employee is expected to retire, it is clear that, unless extraordinary circumstances should occur, or special permits are to be granted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, until the beginning of 2024, the IEN will not be legally allowed to hire new employees outside the existing plans. It is also impossible to anticipate if and in what way existing laws and regulations will change after the aforementioned period. Nevertheless, these obstacles should not restrict the IEN from promoting policies designed to establish balanced gender representation in the workforce. These principles and policies have to be implemented with particular care and dedication in creation of new, and/or restructuring of existing IEN’s organs and bodies, such as the Steering Committee, Collegium, Scientific Council, Operational Centers, Departments, etc.

The situation is particularly disconcerting in the category of Administrative Professionals, which is completely dominated by women. The IEN’s Strategy 25 anticipates an increase in the number of employees among Administrative Professionals from current 5 to 8 employees. Considering the current situation regarding the gender distributions, the policy of encouragement of the underrepresented gender (including vulnerable groups) to apply for expected job openings should be implemented methodically and carefully. It is particularly important to emphasize that women are traditionally overrepresented in this group and that potential employment of male workers is and would be highly dependent on their availability on the market, which may be directly related to the effectiveness of corresponding state policies in the field of gender equality. Nevertheless, the IEN should still promote the employment of

underrepresented gender in this category, both as its own contribution to state policies in the field and the gender equality and balance in its own workforce structure.

According to the Article 4 of the Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade [*Правилник о раду Института економских наука у Београду*], the sole responsible person for delivering the decision for the employment of new researchers or administrative professionals is the Director of the IEN, who is also authorized to choose between applicants for a vacant job position. Therefore, the GEP 25 also transfers the responsibility for implementation of gender equality policies in employment of new researchers and administrative professionals to the Director.

## **Parental Leave**

Article 28 of the Law on Gender Equality [*Закон о родној равноправности: 52/2021-7*] of the Republic of Serbia guarantees equal opportunities for women and men “in the field of employment and work and evaluation of the total value of unpaid housework”, which includes “pregnancy leave, maternity leave, duration of maternity leave and benefits during maternity leave; leave for the care of a child and special care for a child with a disability”. Article 33 also forbids “gender inequality for the duration of the pregnancy leave, maternity leave, leave for the care of a child and special care for a child with a disability”. The Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade [*Правилник о раду Института економских наука у Београду*] does not directly recognize the possibility for male employees to use the pregnancy and paternity leave, although it is also a fact that there are no records that any male employees of the IEN had ever requested a parental leave, even though the possibility had been

introduced in earlier legislation, i.e., the 2009 Law on Gender Equality [*Закон о равноправности полова: 104/2009-61*].

### *Suggested Measures*

It is necessary to make changes in the Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade [*Правилник о раду Института економских наука у Београду*], or to deliver other appropriate legal instruments in accordance with provisions of the Law on Gender Equality of the Republic of Serbia regarding the parental leave. This is expected to be achieved in the period of the duration of the GEP 25 and the IEN's Strategy 25, or the latest until 2025. Aiming to create working conditions that enable women and men to share responsibility for children and the home, the related information with adequate explanations of procedures should be provided to all employees. The IEN will also keep records and make statistics and questionnaires about parental leave and impact of parenthood on employees' work performance in order to further promote gender equality in this field by supporting the work-life balance. The Steering Committee and the Director of the IEN are responsible for introducing changes to the Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade, while the person responsible for the implementation of its provisions is the Director.

### **Prevention of Sexual/Gender Harassment**

Article 32 of the Law on Gender Equality [*Закон о родној равноправности: 52/2021-7*] of the Republic of Serbia prohibits “harassment, sexual harassment and sexual blackmail at work or in connection with work on the basis of sex or gender, which are committed by employers, employees or other persons employed towards other employees or other persons engaged in

work”, and also explains that “gender-based harassment and sexual harassment are prohibited not only in the workplace, but also during employment, professional development and promotion”. The Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade [*Правилник о раду Института економских наука у Београду*] does not treat directly sexual/gender harassment in its provisions, predominantly due to the relative novelty of such legislation in the Republic of Serbia. In addition, the Working Group has found that there are no official records of sexual/gender harassment among the IEN employees.

#### *Suggested measures*

It is necessary to make changes in the Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade [*Правилник о раду Института економских наука у Београду*], or to deliver other appropriate legal instruments in accordance with provisions of the Law on Gender Equality of the Republic of Serbia regarding the sexual/gender harassment. This is expected to be achieved in the period of the duration of the GEP 25 and the IEN’s Strategy 25, or the latest by 2025. In the process of preparations for making these changes, anonymous questionnaires should be prepared in order to analyze the employees’ perception and understanding about any potential cases of discrimination and harassment in the IEN. Similar questionnaires and surveys should be organized periodically for comparative purposes. Furthermore, based on the information collected through questionnaires and surveys, educational programs should be organized and/or informative leaflets/brochures disseminated among employees on matters related to sexual/gender harassment. The GEP 25 and any other related documents and regulations which will be produced and/or formulated in the process should be disseminated accordingly. The Steering Committee and the Director of the IEN is responsible for

introducing changes to the Code of Work/Labor Relation of the Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade, while the person responsible for the implementation of its provisions is the Director.

### Table Presentation of Planned Activities

Key area	Objectives	Measures	Timeline					Responsible person/body	Indicators
			2021	2022	2023	2024	2025		
Researchers	Establishing gender balance among senior and junior researchers <sup>6</sup>	Encouragement of the underrepresented gender to apply for job openings	*	*	*	*	*	Director of the IEN	Employment of underrepresented gender
Admin. Professionals	Establishing gender balance in this group	Encouragement of the underrepresented gender to apply for job openings	*	*	*	*	*	Director of the IEN	Employment of underrepresented gender
Steering Committee	Establishing gender balance in this group	Encouraging gender equality in appointment of new members	*	*	*	*	*	Scientific Council and the Government of the Republic of Serbia	Employment of underrepresented gender
Collegium	Establishing gender balance in this group	Encouraging gender equality in the selection of members	*	*	*	*	*	Director of the IEN	Employment of underrepresented gender
Scientific Council	Establishing gender balance in this group	Introduction of changes in the Code of Conduct of the Scientific Council	*	*	*	*	*	Scientific Council	Employment of underrepresented gender
Operational Centers	Establishing gender balance in this group	Introducing and supporting gender balance in Operational Centers	*	*	*	*	*	Director of the IEN	Employment of underrepresented gender

<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of the GEP 25, it has been established that the group of “senior researchers” consists of Senior Research Associates [*Виши научни сарадник*] and Principal Research Fellows [*Научни саветник*]. “Junior researchers” refers to Research Trainees [*Истраживач приправник*] and Research Assistants [*Истраживач сарадник*] (doctoral candidates).



Departments	Establishing gender balance in this group	Introducing and supporting gender balance in Departments	*	*	*	*	*	Director of the IEN	Employment of underrepresented gender
Parental Leave	Introducing and promoting use of parental leave among male employees	Survey on impact of parenthood on employees' work performance	*	*	*	*	*	Director of the IEN	Conducting regular surveys, recording and analyzing data
		Formulation of adequate provisions in the IEN's Code of Work/Labor Relation		*	*	*	*	Steering Committee and the Director of the IEN	Use of parental leave among male employees
Prevention of Sexual/Gender Harassment	Preventing sexual /gender harassment	Survey on employees' experiences regarding potential sexual/gender harassment in the workplace	*	*	*	*	*	Director of the IEN	Conducting regular surveys, recording and analyzing data
		Formulation of adequate provisions in the IEN's Code of Work/Labor Relation		*	*	*	*	Steering Committee and the Director of the IEN	No recorded cases of sexual/gender harassment in the workplace

## Monitoring

The Working Group is responsible with monitoring the dynamics and effectiveness of activities planned by the GEP 25. Monitoring will be performed in collaboration with existing bodies of the IEN and through continuous communication with the employees in forms of presentations, interviews, anonymous surveys or any other formats deemed necessary for the particular activity. In that respect, the Working Group is also expected to perform the role of the

coordinating body in establishing and supporting an open communication with the IEN's management and different bodies.