

# SCIENCE EUROPE STATEMENT ON

# WOMEN -IN- SCIENCE



We Need to Stand for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Now More Than Ever

Science Europe Statement on International Women's Day



On International Women's Day, Science Europe reaffirms its commitment to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the European research ecosystem. EDI is an essential part of research quality. We aim to promote a research ecosystem where all scholars can realise their potential regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, disabilities, ethnic origin, or social background.

Women and minority groups, however, continue to face barriers, biases, discrimination, and violence both in academia and society at large. From the unequal sharing of care responsibilities to sexual violence, research environments still do not provide the required conditions for all to thrive. While equality is a core value of the research culture that we promote, eradicating biases, discrimination, and violence is of crucial importance to realising academic freedom. No one should be prevented from conducting research – or prevented from taking part in research altogether – because of their identity or sexual orientation.

Against this backdrop, we must act decisively to combat inequalities and promote a European science that is respectful and inclusive of all people. In the current global context of generalised backlash against academic freedom and the rights of women, LGBTQ+ people, migrants, and other marginalised groups, Science Europe calls for action on several essential aspects that require international cooperation to implement:

- **Systematising the integration of the EDI dimension in research content.** Considering the multifaceted differences between people – both in research content and priorities – is key to enhancing scientific quality, producing better outcomes, and increasing the societal relevance of science. Too often, this is conflated with ensuring the gender balance of research teams. Guidelines and training should be made available.
- **Step up action to combat gender-based violence and sexual misconduct in academia.** Gender-based violence and sexual misconduct continue to happen in academia at alarming rates. Significantly marginalised groups - such as transgender or non-binary people - are even more at risk than women. However, despite the situation's urgency, very few policies have been put in place by research funders or performers in Europe. The full implementation of the zero-



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tolerance code of conduct on gender-based violence and sexual harassment should become a priority.

- **Persistent inequalities should be addressed.** Despite efforts, the participation of women and minority groups in research is still too low, and they leave academia at a higher rate. The participation also differs between disciplines and across career ages. Interventions have often been focused on gender equality - frequently only addressing equality between men and women - and we need to step up efforts to address all inequalities and discriminations.
- **Ensure adequate funding for research on gender, sex, race and ethnicity, migration, and inequality and discrimination.** Echoing measures implemented in Europe, particularly in Hungary, the U.S. government has restricted freedom of research, including through bans on studies that mention particular words relating to sex and gender, race, disability and other protected characteristics. We need to continue to promote research on those issues.

Acting to create more inclusive and equal research ecosystems was always a necessity. The current context of a sharp decline in the level of protection of academic freedom and the rise of far-right political movements, characterised by the wholesale targeting of women and minority and discriminated groups, highlights the need for urgent action. Science Europe will develop and implement relevant actions and activities, including through our advocacy for a strong and inclusive EU Framework Programme 10, and we will advocate for the points above to be integrated in it.

