Context and considerations of gender equality from ESF’s perspective
ESF’s NEW MISSION

1) ESF’s traditional mission (funding of cross-border collaborative research programmes and networks) ended in December 2015 after 42 years of setting European research agendas.

2) ESF’s governance unanimously approved the continuation of the Association with a new strategic orientation and a 3-year Business Plan for the development of an Expert Services Division called “Science Connect.”

3) In January 2016, Science Connect began developing the new activities and science-support services outlined on ESF’s Business Plan, maintaining ESF’s standard of excellence and quality.

4) ESF’s aim remains to promote scientific developments through collaborative actions, mainly by supporting decision-making for research funding organisations.
OUR EXPERTISE

300,000 Researchers in our network

Proven science management procedures

2,000 programmes managed in 30 countries

12 languages spoken by our team
ESF’s aim is to serve the needs of the European research community and it is currently offering services to science and research in Europe through:

• Peer review services
• Evaluation services
• Programme and Project Management
• Career Tracking
• Hosting Expert Boards and Committees
CAREER TRACKING

Obtain high quality, reliable data on research careers

1) Research Career Tracking and Monitoring services for surveys and studies
2) Running joint international or national projects
3) Tracking the quality of research training and skills
4) Tracking to find out where researchers move in their careers
5) Tracking for accountability and impact assessment

Why ESF?

- A high quality survey process with strong emphasis on high response rates
- A partnership-based methodology using qualitative processes (e.g. focus groups, interviews, etc.)
- A tailored approach ranging from setting-up individual career tracking systems for organisations (in particular universities) and assessment of the impact of research funding on researchers’ careers, to larger-scale surveys across several organisations.

▶ http://www.esf.org/our-services/career-tracking/
EXPERT BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Benefit from effective secretariats, hosting platforms and organisational structures

Composed of high-level independent researchers or research managers to provide targeted expert advice in areas of science, policy, infrastructure, environment and society in Europe

- Committee on Radio Astronomy Frequencies (8% Female)
- European Space Sciences Committee (36% Female)
- Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee (11% Female)

http://www.esf.org/our-services/expert-boards-and-committees/
TOPICS COVERED TODAY

1) Context and considerations of gender equality within ESF Science Connect (guidelines & best practices, services)

2) Concept of the career tracking platform and advocacy in the context of gender equality issues (gender imbalance, returnees to careers, dual career couples etc)
Recommendations & best practices stemming from ESF reports
Gender Equality and ESF
An ethical mindset at the core of our mission
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Responsible research procedures
Code of conduct

“Sensitivity to age, gender, culture, religion, ethnic origin and social class of research subjects should be evinced”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Principles of good peer-review – 1

“Funding organisations and reviewers should not discriminate in any way on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic condition”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Principles of good peer-review – 2

“Conscious and explicit attention must be paid to ensuring gender balance for both remote and panel reviewers as well as in chairing panels according to national and European standard norms and objectives. It is recommended that a gender ratio of at least 40% of women to men should be attained”
“In the case of proposals having an equal rank, it may be legitimate for the funding body to differentiate proposals, where necessary, using previously agreed methods. Here, diversity issues (e.g. gender) might be taken into account”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Competitive European Research Area

“Core prerequisites for realising a successful and competitive ERA include a critical mass of skilled researchers and diversity of research groups, including gender diversity – also in senior positions and selection committees”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Careers, mobility and scientific quality – 1

“Today women outnumber men at graduate level, represent around 50% at PhD level, but only around 20% at Grade A level. Incentives should ensure proper and balanced gender recruitment to research positions and committees – including leading researcher positions”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Careers, mobility and scientific quality – 2

“In addition to making better use of the quantitative research potential in both genders, this will also contribute to greater scientific quality and innovation through greater gender diversity in research groups manifested by diversity of ideas and cognitive strategies”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Careers, mobility and scientific quality – 3

“Individual ‘non-standard’ career paths affected by changes or interruptions due to professional mobility and family-reasons should be considered when selecting experts”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Careers, mobility and scientific quality – 4

“Doctorate holders are highly geographically mobile for career and knowledge advancement purposes. Mobility has benefits and costs at national, institutional and individual levels. While awareness of the benefits is widespread, the pressure to be geographically mobile can be difficult for those who have family/caring responsibilities. Doctorate-sponsoring institutions need to recognise this in their funding models and ensure that mobility is not a perceived or real precondition for funding or advancement”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Careers, mobility and scientific quality – 5

“A narrow definition of a scientific career, where rather strict focus on excellence in research, might hinder engagement with science and society issues since it is seen as in the worst case lowering the standing of the scientist and in the best case not being considered in career criteria. Here also gender comes in, as studies hint at the potentiality that this kind of care for the articulation between science and society has the tendency to be gendered and taken up by women more often than by men”
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Careers, mobility and scientific quality – 6

“Tension has been identified at various levels and, in particular, between career work that is guided by a set of formal criteria, and engagement work, which is not recognised sufficiently by existing academic reward systems; this is also seen as involving important gender issues”
SOME DATA
Survey analysis report on peer review practices (2011)

53% of the participating organisations indicated that only 25% or less of the entries in their database were female reviewers; accordingly, 35% of the organisations rate the effectiveness of their database in terms of gender distribution comparatively low with 3 or 4 on a six-point scale.
Analysis of survey results

- Import of survey data to SPSS
- Analysis of researchers’ mobility and linkages in terms of geography, industry, interdisciplinary and virtual research
- Analysis of geographic mobility drivers
- Analysis of career choice motivators, researchers’ skills utilisation, career satisfaction and research outcomes
- Analysis of trends by age/experience cohort, gender, region etc.
- Production of organisational level statistics for above data points
Headline findings

Some of the interesting **gender dimensions**

**Equivalent** for men and women: doctoral completion times, share of tenured posts, share of senior research posts

**But...**

1) Men and women are clustered in different (traditional) research sectors
   1) **Men**: physical sciences, computers & engineering
   2) **Women**: social & life sciences

2) Salary levels are significantly higher in the sectors males are concentrated in

3) Women who work in male dominated research sectors still earn lower salaries than men
Headline findings

*Gender dimensions cont.*

**Interestingly**

1) Women earn less but win more research prizes and are more active at conferences

2) Men are somewhat more active in terms of publications

In relation to *geo movements*

1) more geographic mobility within Europe than some other regions

2) geographical movement from southern or eastern countries into Northern European countries
at ESF?...
HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH RECOGNITION

1) ESF was recognized in 2011 by EC as providing ‘HR Excellence in Research’ - ESF’s working within the best practice guidelines of the European Charter of Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

2) Gives us the right to display the logo ‘HR Excellence in Research’

3) Part of this process involves the setting-up of the ESF Internal Code of Conduct (11/14) now governing internal policies and practices

4) Our recruitment policy guarantees impartiality through selection (incl. gender issues) by competence and evidence-based qualifications (annual PMP) and salary levels

► http://www.esf.org/careers/human-resources-excellence-in-research/
To help us and our partners in this task, we are now bringing together the world’s leading scientists and researchers to develop the “ESF Community of Experts” that comprises three colleges:

1) The **College of Review Panel Members** who will physically meet during panel meetings and use their broad expertise to build consensus of the scientific merit of proposals (currently appointed for 18 months – current number is 150+)

2) The **College of Expert Reviewers** who use their specialised expertise to undertake online scientific assessments of research proposal and fellowship applications (appointed for 3 years – current number is 2000+), with an objective at the end of 2018 of 12,000 members

3) The **College of Research Associates** who are invited to collaborate with ESF on temporary missions by identifying peers and checking the validity and quality of the evaluation of peer-review reports
RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

Principles of good peer-review – 2

“Conscious and explicit attention must be paid to ensuring gender balance for both remote and panel reviewers as well as in chairing panels according to national and European standard norms and objectives. *It is recommended that a gender ratio of at least 40% of women to men should be attained*”
ESF experts: do we fare better?

Community of Experts
- Female: 23%
- Male: 77%

External reviewers
- Female: 22%
- Male: 78%

Review Panel members
- Female: 19%
- Male: 81%
Are these biases purely reflecting the "traditional" discipline gender bias?
Improvement measures

1) Of course maintain ethical framework and Codes of Conduct (EC and internal)

2) Proactive approach (positive discrimination) to (i) Review Panel members; (ii) College of Reviewers selection/invitation
   • Guidelines provided to Science Officers and Research Associates
   • Acknowledgement and communication on that policy and approach (website, conferences, etc)

3) Specific support for participation of female scientists to panels and expert boards (child care incentive)
ESF staff – a serious issue...

**ESF staff**
- Male: 21%
- Female: 79%

**Science staff**
- Male: 33%
- Female: 67%

**Admin staff**
- Male: 10%
- Female: 90%