
Approval of the first Equality Plan (2024-2027) for the members of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans

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Last April, the plenary of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC) approved the first four-year Equality Plan¹ for its members, with 78.05% voter turnout. Those who voted were overwhelmingly in favour of the plan, with 85% for it compared to 1.9% against it and 13.1% abstentions.

The drafting of the Gender Equality Plan, “which aims to work towards a balance between men and women in total IEC membership and in the sections’ governing bodies and affiliates”, was the first assignment given to the Equality Committee created by the resolution of the Permanent Council of 9 September 2021 for the purpose of “launching a policy that promotes gender balance and raises all IEC members’ awareness of the importance of fostering an equality policy”, according to the electoral agenda of the IEC’s current governing team.

With the approval of the Equality Plan – on which the reform of the regulations governing the IEC (primarily including its bylaws, its internal regulations, the regulations of its various sections and the regulations of its affiliates) is to be based –, the corpus of the framework guidelines for the achievement of gender equality was completed. The Plan for IEC members joins the Plan

1. <https://igualtat.iec.cat/pla-digualtat-de-liec-aprovat-el-17-04-2024/>.

for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men for IEC staff (February 2022) and the Action Protocol to Prevent and Address Sexual Harassment (September 2022).

Law 17/2015, on Effective Equality Between Men and Women, served as the framework of the Equality Plan for IEC staff. Furthermore, Law 9/2022, on Science, ushered in a new legal framework that obligates agents in the “research, development and innovation system”, including the IEC and its affiliates, to develop a gender equality plan for their members that “at least provides for the adoption of specific measures to work towards gender equality in the system; the inclusion of experts in gender on the assessment and evaluation bodies; and the balanced composition of the governing bodies”. It also compels them to set up mechanisms to assess compliance with the Gender Equality Plan, to include a report on the gender perspective in the respective transparency portals and to include the obligation to take action against sexual harassment, revictimisation and gender-based violence, as well as mechanisms to protect and support victims, in their code of ethics (Art. 7).

Based on these minimums, the Plan, which was drafted in the Equality Committee, starts with a prior diagnosis which detected serious inequalities between women and men, at the expense of the former, in most of the areas analysed. For example, in terms of the composition of the IEC, using data from 2022, the 72 women members accounted for 20.5% of the whole; broken down into categories, this means that women account for 25% of corresponding members (22 out of 66 total), 15% of emeritus members (22 out of 134) and 23% of full members (28 out of 93). By section, the Philosophy and Social Sciences section has the highest proportion of women (26%), while the Biological Sciences section (15%) has the lowest. In the IEC’s affiliates, women held 32% of the presidencies, and the situation was close to parity on the governing bodies, with 39% women and 61% men.

In the sphere of periodical publications, there is parity in none of the three areas analysed in the Plan (direction/editing, editorial boards and advisory/scientific councils), with a majority of men in all of them.

The Plan is organised into five different areas: “Culture of equality”, “Composition of the IEC”, “Composition of the IEC’s governing bodies and other decision-making and representative bodies”, “Research projects, publications and awards” and “Violence-free environment”. Once the diagnosis had been performed, a series of specific goals was set for each area, along with a set of measures for each goal. Following the plans of other research centres, universities and public administrations, the bodies in charge of promoting and taking responsibility for each measure, the implementation calendar and the implementation instruments, if applicable, were specified for each measure.

The “Culture of equality” area takes shape in three goals: to bring visibility to the IEC’s commitment to equality by making gender equality a cross-cutting principle in the organisation; to make the contributions by the IEC’s women members visible in the different media and communication tools; and to develop and improve the staff’s knowledge and skills in addressing

gender equality issues. These goals are transformed into 14 specific measures which involve the Equality Commission and other IEC bodies (including the affiliates' governing councils or boards) and hold them accountable for them.

Area II, "Composition of the IEC", and Area III, "Composition of the IEC's governing bodies and other decision-making and representative bodies", are the ones that, given the information from the prior diagnosis which showed such disparities between the two genders, require greater efforts to reform the IEC's operating rules in order to achieve either balanced representation ("the situation that guarantees the presence of women in an appropriate proportion in each circumstance") or parity ("a situation which guarantees the presence of women and men such that neither sex accounts for more than 60% or less than 40% of the whole, and which tends towards 50% of each sex") between men and women under the terms of Article 2 of the aforementioned Law 17/2015. In this sense, Area II has a single goal: "To achieve internal IEC rules that are respectful of the regulatory context on gender matters in force in order to guarantee a balanced composition of women and men among full and corresponding members of the IEC". Area III has four goals: to achieve internal IEC rules that are respectful of the regulatory context on gender matters in force in order to guarantee an equal composition of women and men on the governing bodies of the IEC and its sections, and in the decision-making and representatives bodies of the IEC and its sections; to achieve internal IEC rules that are respectful of the regulatory context on gender matters in force in order to foster the balanced representation of men and women in the affiliates; and to promote a reform of the affiliates' rules so that the composition of their governing bodies shows parity between women and men. To this end, a general reform committee was created – a step that should be echoed in the sections and affiliates – which shall propose to the decision-making bodies a project to reform the IEC's internal rules of operation.

Area IV, "Research projects, publications and awards", has five goals: to adapt the IEC's research data-collection to the criteria of the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans; to make the research contributions of the IEC's women members visible; to increase the number of awards honouring women offered by the IEC and its sections; to promote a balanced presence of women on the editorial boards, management boards and advisory councils of the periodicals of the IEC, its sections and its affiliates; and to achieve internal IEC rules that are respectful of the regulatory context on gender matters in force in order to guarantee parity in the representation of women and men on the committees that decide on research projects and awards. The bodies in charge of promoting and taking responsibility for these measures are primarily the Equality Commission, the Permanent Council, the respective governing bodies of the sections and the Publications Committee.

Finally, Area V, which aims to achieve a "violence-free environment", has two goals: to extend the protection of the aforementioned Action Protocol to Prevent and Address Sexual Harassment to all members of the IEC and its affiliates, given that at the time the Plan was approved it only provided protection to staff; and to ensure that the entire IEC community is involved in

preventing violence. As of today, the first goal has already been met with the expansion of the existing Protocol to IEC scholars and the creation of another committee for cases in which the complaint or report comes from IEC members or members of its affiliates, in addition to the creation of the Investigation Committee planned for staff. The other goal will require the involvement of the IEC's governing teams, the sections' respective governing bodies and the governing boards of the affiliates.

Some measures, like those in the "Culture of equality" area – including the institutional celebration on 8 March and actions to make IEC women members' contributions visible, like the *Pioneres del coneixement* podcast series – have only just begun to be part of the IEC's day-to-day operations. However, many others, especially those related to areas II, II and IV, will have to await the reform of the IEC's overarching regulations, namely the bylaws and internal regulations, which should be approved in December 2024, according to the calendar established in the Equality Plan. After that, the operating rules of the sections and affiliates and the IEC's other rules should be followed within the timeframes stipulated in its calendar, which states that all the goals contained in the Equality Plan should be achieved by 2027, when a second plan will be drawn up.