

# GENDER EQUALITY PLAN OF FONDAZIONE POLITECNICO DI MILANO

Year 2024

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# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

## **FONDAZIONE POLITECNICO DI MILANO 2024**

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### Action Plan 2024:

- Work-life balance and organizational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Gender equality in recruitment and career advancement
- Gender mainstreaming in research and teaching content
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

## FOREWORD

*Gender equality* is a core value of the European Union, and it benefits research and innovation by attracting and retaining more talent and ensuring that everyone can maximise their potential. The EU has a well-established regulatory framework on gender equality, including binding directives, which apply broadly to the entire labour market, including the research sector.

Gender mainstreaming ensures that decision-making and legislation is of higher quality and has greater relevance to society, because it ensures that policies respond more effectively to the needs of all citizens: women and men, girls and boys. It makes public interventions more effective and ensures that inequalities are not perpetuated.

Over the years, the EU has made progress towards gender equality, but this is not enough, and gains are fragile. Data for the 2023 index, which mainly covers 2021 and 2022, collected by the *European Institute for Gender Equality* (EIGE) shows us that only Sweden has a score above 80 points and is getting closer and closer to gender equality, but Sweden only accounts for about 2% of the EU population. Italy has an index of 68.2 and is, however, below the European average of 70.2.

Many structural barriers to gender equality in research and innovation still persist and for this reason in *Horizon Europe*, the research and innovation funding programme until 2027, there are 3 main levels at which gender equality is addressed and the first of these is to have a *Gender Equality Plan in place* (GEP) as an eligibility criterion for certain categories of legal entities from EU countries and non-EU countries associated to Horizon Europe.

The *GEP*, however, is not intended to be for the Fondazione only the implementation of a mandatory procedure to access national and European funding, but rather a mirror that reflects who we are and who we want to be. The way each organization sets equality goals defines its knowledge, sensitivity, and commitment to the matter. That's why a gender equality plan is a blend of goals and procedures. It is an idealistic document but concrete, inspiring and factual at the same time.

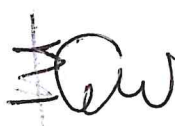
A gender equality plan is a report that echoes the values that guide the Fondazione and the Politecnico di Milano, which is its reference body. A community that looks forward, respects and treats everyone equally, and strives to give everyone the same opportunities.

With this conviction, we have allocated dedicated resources, striving our best to recognize the dignity of every person in the workplace, to ensure equal treatment, to promote initiatives aimed at removing discrimination.

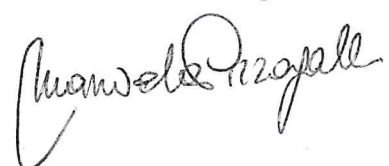
Andrea Sianesi  
Presidente



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Direttore Generale



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Vicedirettrice Generale con delega HR



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Fondazione Politecnico di Milano (Fondazione) has increasingly recognized gender equality, equal opportunities, and the promotion of diversity and inclusion as cross-cutting issues at both strategic/political and managerial levels. These values are key to the development of research and innovation.

Despite this, we have realized, precisely in carrying out the activities planned for the GEP 2021-2022 and 2023, that much can still be done to continue to acquire greater awareness on gender equality and equal opportunities, also by broadening the perspective, especially to improve in a more concrete way respect for the authenticity of the other, different from us in gender, age, academic background, personality, and this is only possible with a concerted effort on the part of the entire organization.

The GEP that we are thus presenting for the year 2024 continues and deepens the work already begun in previous years, so as to consolidate within the organization an approach that promotes an institutional and cultural change towards equality at all levels, responding to the need we feel to ensure a safe, fair and respectful environment for all those who work in the Fondazione.

The document and its structure follow the indications provided by the European Commission and the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans.

In this framework, the Fondazione's GEP 2024 presents, in Section 2, the general context of gender policies and objectives, detailing their implementation strategies in Section 3.

In addition, Section 4 introduces the resources allocated by the Fondazione to support these policies.

Section 4 will also deal with data collection and monitoring, the 2023 Gender Budget and the 2023 Activity Report, i.e. actions carried out in the field of training and awareness raising among the community.

The objectives and actions of the 2024 Plan are described in Section 5, which is structured into the following main areas, chosen according to the available guidelines:

- Work-life balance and organizational culture;
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- Gender mainstreaming in research and teaching content;
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

For each objective, the actions and related indicators will be indicated.

The Fondazione's GEP 2024 was carried out by a working group, coordinated by Manuela Pizzagalli, Deputy General Manager with responsibility for HR management, and Ornella Sartori, Human Resources Development Manager.

As far as some activities (training, coaching) are concerned, the group makes use of the professional contribution of Dr. Carla Bosio, psychologist, Life & Business Coach, who since 2021 has begun to support the Fondazione in a process of organizational development and growth in a broader sense.

The document was submitted for review and discussion to the President and General Manager of Fondazione Politecnico di Milano and was approved on 21 December 2023.



## SECTION 2: GENDER POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Before going into detail about the concrete and specific actions that the Politecnico di Milano Fondazione plans to continue and undertake in 2024 to promote gender equality, it is important to underline its overall vision of gender policy and its main objectives. These, in fact, constitute the final objectives that we propose to pursue over time, through the specific actions that will implement the changes necessary to achieve them.

Individual inclusion, equity and the safeguarding of the dignity of all individuals are cornerstones of the cultural heritage of the Fondazione, which has the Politecnico di Milano (PoliMI) as its reference body. In particular, Article 3 of PoliMI's statute states that the Politecnico di Milano *"recognizes the dignity of every person in work and study, guaranteeing equal treatment, and promotes initiatives aimed at removing discrimination in training, access to work, orientation and career advancement."*

In the same vein, the Fondazione's Code of Ethics, in point 2.3, states that *"Each Recipient must recognize and respect the personal dignity, private sphere and personality rights of any individual, must not discriminate, harass or offend based on race, color, nationality, political beliefs, sex, religion, age, physical impairments, membership of trade unions or political parties, sexual orientation, marital or family situation, and in general any intimate characteristic of the person."*

From these premises, it follows that gender-specific measures must be included within this framework of broader inclusion objectives. These measures are considered to strengthen the gender dimension, where it is deemed necessary to accelerate the achievement of the equal participation of men and women in all roles and activities of the Fondazione, as provided for in the Code of Ethics, point 2.4, according to which *"The management of human resources is based on respect for the personality and professionalism of each of them. Professional development and personnel management are based on the principle of "equal opportunities".*

Notwithstanding the aforementioned attention to all the variables of diversity in the protection of rights and in the fight against all forms of discrimination, we believe that it is important to recognize gender equality as a predominant factor in our society, since, as the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) informs us and as we have seen in the Preface, the index on gender equality within the EU is improving, But very slowly and there is still a long way to go and there is still a lot to do to achieve this goal.

Finally, these equality objectives are aligned with those of the European Union, whose Horizon Europe programme has the operational objective of strengthening the gender dimension across the gender-relevant specific programme (see COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2021/764 of 10 May 2021 establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU, Article 2, p. 3.)

## SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In order to achieve the above-mentioned gender targets, the implementation strategies already outlined in the GEPs 2021-2022 and 2023 are confirmed and expanded. These strategies will guide the design of the specific actions that will be described later in the document.

### Career & Career Growth Tracking

Gender-equitable career development is of the utmost importance to the Fondazione. This ensures that the best talent is recruited, regardless of gender, and is given every opportunity for rewarding career paths and professional growth. Any potential sources of gender bias in assessment processes involved in career progression will be eliminated.

#### MAIN STEPS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:

- **Raising awareness on the consideration of sex and gender dimension** in the drafting of research projects;
- **Raising awareness among all those involved in the evaluation processes** gender-related issues of any kind;
- **Raising awareness about implicit biases** in assessment processes and career management;
- **Analysing the long-term effects of gender policies and practices** within the organisation and on the representation of women in the Fondazione's governing bodies.

### Promoting a more effective work-life balance

This responsibility increases substantially when there are children in the family or when elderly family members, or others in the broader sense of family, require assistance. The safety net of social care services is often not sufficient to provide the support that women, and all those with caring tasks, would need in order not to be overly affected by these duties in their working life and careers.

The Fondazione strongly supports and promotes a substantial cultural change to achieve gender equality in caregiving within the family, understood in a broad sense. It also aims to concretely contribute to improving the current situation with dedicated actions, with significant progress made in this regard during 2023 and in previous years..

#### MAIN STEPS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:

- **Expanding flexible working paradigms** for staff with caregiving responsibilities.

- **Promoting inclusive leadership models** and avoiding work schedules that penalize those with caregiving duties.



## SECTION 4: PROCESS AND PRE-REQUISITES

With such significant objectives to be achieved, we will detail in the following pages the resources that the Fondazione will dedicate to the implementation of gender policies. We will also outline the data collection processes to monitor their progress, and the actions to raise awareness of prejudices. The mitigation of these prejudices forms the basis of the cultural change necessary to accompany the desired change.

### Dedicated resources

In previous years, the Fondazione has already dedicated resources and expertise to the implementation of actions and strategies to support the promotion of gender equality, diversity and inclusion, managed by the GEP Group, as identified in section 1.

In addition to an economic effort in this area, approximately €14,000.00 in 2023, the Fondazione has involved a number of people, who make up the GEP group, to pursue the objectives of equality, inclusion and well-being for all. Costs related to human resources directly involved in these areas are not displayed, and are estimated to be on the order of two man-months.

On the other hand, as regards the economic resources that the Fondazione will dedicate in 2024 to pursue the objectives, which will be illustrated in detail in section 5, these are estimated at 14,000.00 euros, without taking into account the cost of the Fondazione's human resources that will be involved in the implementation of the process.

### Data collection and monitoring

To develop actions and strategies in the field of inclusion and equal opportunities, the Fondazione will publish an annual Gender Budget, collecting in a single document a wide range of data pertaining to its staff.

In addition, regarding the two-year period 2020-2021, in compliance with the provisions of art. 46 of Legislative Decree no. 198 of 11 April 2006 "Code of Equal Opportunities" and subsequent amendments, the "Periodic Report on the situation of male and female personnel" *was submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on 26 September 2022*, also made mandatory for companies employing more than 50 employees by Law no. 162 of 5 November 2021.

In addition to the Gender Budget, the Fondazione publishes an Annual Report in this Section 4 to describe in detail, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the specific measures carried out to support the implementation of its positive action plan.

The development of a Gender Equality Plan for 2024 is, therefore, closely linked to the publication of the Fondazione's Gender Budget and Annual Report and will be illustrated in Section 5.

## GENDER BUDGETING 2023

The Gender Budget at the end of 2023, referring to the Fondazione's staff, is presented below:

- The data show a percentage of the female population of the Fondazione's staff of 60%, distributed as follows in the various Units:
  - **Operations Unit**, 62% female share
  - **Accounting Unit**, 58% of women
  - **Communication Unit**, 67% of women
  - **Business Accelerator**, 20% female share.
  - **HR Area**, 100% female share
- The majority of the workforce is therefore confirmed to be female. Within the Board of Directors, the share of women is 36%, while at the top level, alongside the two male figures made up of the Chairman and the General Manager, a Deputy General Manager has been added with responsibility for the management of Human Resources.
- Finally, with the introduction in 2022 in the Fondazione's Organizational Chart of the role of Program Leaders, who coordinate the activities of the Operations area on four specific projects, the presence of women is 75%.

## Activity report 2023

Among the prerequisites that the European Commission presents as mandatory in the process, the definition and implementation of a public GEP and training aimed at acquiring greater awareness on issues related to gender equality plays a leading role.

Raising awareness of the importance of equality issues and, in addition, strengthening a positive attitude towards diversity of any kind within the Fondazione is, therefore, a crucial issue and we recognize this action as a necessary step to be implemented before and during the definition of new strategies for equal opportunities.

In 2021, a set of actions was launched, following an internal survey aimed at understanding the corporate climate from multiple aspects, including *work-life balance*, training and development, communication and collaboration between the various functions existing within the Fondazione. This was followed by Focus Groups, one for each operational area, whose proposals converged into a mixed Focus that defined concrete actions aimed, among other things, at further improving the *work-life balance*,

Among the training initiatives launched in 2021, it is also worth mentioning the Fondazione's provision of the Coursera platform to its employees, free of charge, which has stimulated training processes even from the bottom up.

In addition, the Fondazione's staff autonomously made their time and skills available, in a format called *training pills*, where there was an exchange of know-how on various identified topics of interest to the organization.

In 2022, in-depth activities continued on issues related to work-life balance, inclusive leadership, within the various areas of the Fondazione, the Mixed Focus Group and with training, and this led:



- In tema di Work life balance:
  - o the adoption of Guidelines for agile working on 28 March 2022, which were then merged into the Individual Smart Working Agreement signed by all employees, which provided for the possibility of working remotely for up to ten days a month, as well as a time slot for disconnection;
  - o Also in 2022, a smart working voucher was provided to facilitate remote work with the purchase of supports useful for its efficiency;
  - o The Fondazione has signed an agreement with the Centro Sportivo Giuriati, a sports centre of the Politecnico di Milano which is located a few minutes' walk from the Fondazione's offices, to allow its employees to access the sports services offered, such as track, gym, masterclasses and more, at the same rates provided for University employees, which are extremely subsidised compared to those reserved for external users. This is precisely to promote a better work-life balance and a new organizational culture that aims at the psychophysical well-being of its employees. A fifth of the Fondazione's employees have joined the initiative.
- On inclusive leadership:
  - o in addition to the refresher and in-depth meetings for all area managers, specific meetings were held for the four Program Leaders, to provide them with the tools to cope in the best possible way with their role of managing collaborators.
  - o the Fondazione, in the person of Ing. Manuela Pizzagalli, who intervened as a corporate mentor, joined the Cross-Mentoring Program: Female Leaders of the Italian-German Chamber of Commerce. A cross-company mentoring program, focused on the theme of female leadership that included training seminars, coaching, events and networking formats for the community of mentors and mentees.

On the subject of training:

- Training meetings, called training pills, *continued throughout 2022*, with the intention of expanding the level of competence and knowledge of the entire organization on various issues of common interest.

**In 2023**, the interventions already started in the previous acts were intensified, especially on issues related to work-life balance, inclusive leadership, effective communication, preconceptions/prejudices/stereotypes, negotiation and conflict management, this led:

In tema di Work life balance:

- o From 1 September 2023, *the Individual Agreement for agile working*, signed by all employees and which provides for the possibility of working remotely for up to ten days a month, as well as a disconnection time slot, no longer has time limits.  
This means that the hybrid working mode, in presence and remotely, has become commonplace within the Fondazione.  
In addition, the possibility of smart working has also been introduced outside national borders, throughout the EU.
- o Taking into account this transformation in the way work is carried out, *a reorganization of the spaces* has been implemented, so that the workplace is more functional, modern and suitable for new work needs.  
Desks have been replaced, no longer reserved for individual employees, but bookable through a special app and based on different work needs, to have agile and streamlined workspaces and spaces have been created where you can work in teams, as well as places where you can retire for calls without having to occupy meeting rooms. All this with the aim of giving greater value and meaning to the work done in the office.
- o An annual telephone voucher *has been introduced* for all those who have given up having a landline telephone number, taking into account the hybrid mode in which work is now carried out.
- o The Fondazione has renewed the agreement with *the Giuriati Sports Center*, already signed in 2022, to allow its employees to access the sports services offered, such as track, gym, masterclasses and



more, at the same rates provided for University employees, extremely facilitated compared to those reserved for external users. This is precisely to promote a better work-life balance and a new organizational culture that aims at the psychophysical well-being of its employees. To date, one-fifth of the Fondazione's employees have joined the initiative.

- To support its employees in a better management of their emotional states in high-pressure situations, the Fondazione has organized a specific *Stress Management course* managed by Dr. Carla Bosisio, to help those who wished to acquire knowledge about stress (definition and relationship between stress and emotions), and to make people aware of their emotional states and any dysfunctional symptoms and to provide cognitive and to manage them, so as to maintain or improve one's well-being and effectiveness.

On inclusive leadership:

- The training sessions on inclusive leadership and employee management of the four Program Leaders continued, as well as the coordinator of the reporting team of the funded projects, to provide them with the tools to best cope with their role as leaders.  
The training was co-financed by Fondimpresa.

On the subject of training:

- The training meetings, called training *pills*, continued, especially on topics of common interest and related to the use of HR platforms, such as Prisma, used for the management of attendance, SW, holidays, leave and illness, as well as travel. It is now also a fundamental tool for planning the reporting of funded projects.
- As part of the training program provided by the Fondazione's GEP 2023, with the aim of raising awareness of gender equality and equal opportunities, especially to improve respect for the authenticity of the other, who is different from themselves in gender, age, academic training, personality, a training was organized that involved all the members of the organization, divided into four groups and managed by Dr. Carla Bosisio.

The training consisted of three meetings of three hours each. The first is dedicated to effective communication, the second to preconceptions/prejudices/stereotypes/cognitive biases and the third to conflict management.

The training was co-financed by Fondimpresa.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	INDICATORS	2023 REPORT
<b>Work-life balance and organizational culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart Work</li> <li>• Gender-inclusive language</li> <li>• Supporting staff in the process of gender transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of the staff using the SW; actions to facilitate SW (e.g. bonuses);</li> <li>• reports received for non-use; training and awareness-raising on the subject;</li> <li>• Monitoring of specific situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 99% of FPM's staff use the SW; Actions: - Individual SW Agreement with no expiry date; - phone bonus; - desk sharing;</li> <li>• No reports received; actions: - training for area managers and PLs; training for employees.</li> <li>• No specific situation reported</li> </ul>

<b>Gender balance in leadership and decision-making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implicit biases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guidelines and training for recruitment processes; Courses delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions: Training for Program Leaders</li> </ul>
<b>Gender equality in recruitment and career advancement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring and training programs for female staff</li> <li>• Inclusive Leadership Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses delivered</li> <li>• Courses delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for all employees on preconceptions, prejudices, stereotypes and cognitive biases.</li> <li>• Program Leader Training</li> </ul>
<b>Gender mainstreaming in research and teaching content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to gender equality in research and training</li> <li>• Promoting ethics and gender in research</li> <li>• Consider the gender dimension in technology transfer activities and business development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting of non-compliance</li> <li>• Reporting of non-compliance</li> <li>• Reporting of non-compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reporting</li> <li>• No reporting</li> <li>• No reporting</li> </ul>
<b>Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for the management and monitoring of cases of gender-based violence</li> <li>• Training on Gender Discrimination and Violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports received</li> <li>• Courses delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reporting</li> <li>• No courses delivered</li> </ul>



## SECTION 5: OBJECTIVES AND RELATED ACTIONS

This section outlines the actions proposed to implement the gender policies discussed in Section 2 and, in turn, enable the Fondazione to achieve the objectives presented in Section 3, continuing the actions already undertaken since 2021 and outlined in Section 4.

### Action Plan 2024

The five lines of action identified in this GEP, and listed on the following pages, have been determined following our policy implementation principles detailed in Section 2 and the general guidelines provided by the European Commission, which highlight the relevant areas of action that should be addressed in general by public and private research institutions in the pursuit of equal opportunities.

In line with this vision and with a systematic approach to the promotion of equality, the Fondazione's GEP defines the measures we intend to pursue in the coming year in these areas, detailing objectives, actions, indicators.

To continue in 2024 the training activity already started in past years, we have already prepared a project, also co-financed by Fondimpresa, which will be managed by our external consultant, Dr. Carla Bosisio, psychologist and Life & Business Coach, who since 2021 has been supporting us in the development of these issues within the Fondazione, which will be structured as follows:

- Training on the topics of inclusive leadership and employee management for Program Leaders, which includes classroom moments, as well as an individual coaching path for each of the leaders.
- Training on conflict management and the relationship with others who are different from themselves, on negotiation for all collaborators who, organized in four groups, will have two meetings of three hours each, to continue the work already started last year, giving more space to experiential activities.

In addition, we will continue with all the activities of past years in support of the psycho-physical well-being of collaborators and we will introduce in 2024 a psychological desk to listen to and support collaborators in moments of particular difficulty, which will be managed, ensuring maximum confidentiality, by Dr. Carla Bosisio.

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	INDICATORS
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<b>Gender balance in leadership and decision-making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implicit biases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guidelines and training for recruitment processes; Courses delivered</li> </ul>
<b>Gender equality in recruitment and career advancement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring and training programs for female staff and beyond</li> <li>• Inclusive Leadership Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Courses delivered</li> <li>• Courses delivered</li> </ul>
<b>Gender mainstreaming in research and teaching content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to gender equality in research and training</li> <li>• Promoting ethics and gender in research</li> <li>• Consider the gender dimension in technology transfer activities and business development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting of non-compliance</li> <li>• Reporting of non-compliance</li> <li>• Reporting of non-compliance</li> </ul>
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