STARS EU

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# Action Plan for Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Deliverable 7.2

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# 1. Introduction

This Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) action plan is the result of the efforts and commitment to equality, equity, inclusion and diversity of the STARS EU alliance of European universities.

The document supports partner organisations to meet GEDI values at Alliance level and includes the various measures that the STARS EU universities have agreed to develop over the next few years within the framework of the 48-month project called **STrategic Alliance for Regional TranSition - STARS European University** (101124529 - STARS EU - ERASMUS-EDU-2023-EUR-UNIV) funded by the Erasmus+ Program, led by Hanze University of Applied Sciences.

This work has been developed within the framework of **Work Package 7: STARS EU Sustainable Model** and specifically under task 7.2, which aims at the development and implementation of the GEDI plan of the STARS EU Alliance. It constitutes one of the deliverables of the project (D7.2).

The main purpose of the STARS EU Action Plan (2025-2027) is to build a more inclusive, equitable, cohesive, diverse and integrating universities and societies by promoting equality, diversity and inclusion as an inherent part of the spirit of European Universities

At the end of this initiative is the overall ambition to help the entire university community benefit from all opportunities, ensuring that no one is left behind, now and in the future. Equality and inclusiveness are core values of the EU and are in the DNA of the higher education institutions that are part of the STARS EU Alliance; this strategy underpins the Alliance's commitment to the central goal of leaving no one behind and the commitment to putting people at the heart of everything we do. In turn, it is increasingly important to promote diversity in a cross-cutting way to help create inclusive and cohesive societies across Europe. Our GEDI strategy and plan aims to include this horizontal dimension in all actions of the alliance, and to promote the diverse and inclusive character of our universities, societies and regions.

In this way, our plan focuses on advancing the cross-cutting objectives of equality, diversity and inclusion as part of a long-term sustainability strategy for the alliance and for European universities.

This action plan starts with the conclusions of the initial analysis carried out by the Alliance, it also highlights existing GEDI measures within the Alliance which can serve as inputs of further actions or as examples. Thereafter, describes the aim and objectives, main target groups, specific measures to be adopted or implemented by the partners. It concludes with the evaluation and monitoring system established for this Action plan.

# About STARS EU

The Strategic Alliance for Regional Transition - STARS European University (STARS EU) is built on the considerable strengths of 9 complementary universities in ambitious reconceptualization of the nature, function and impact of a modern university, aiming to deepen, intensify, and expand the effectiveness of our existing inter-institutional cooperation. We aim to establish a European University, which creates a new generation of future-oriented students, and delivers innovative, flexible, diverse, and challenge-based educational and research systems open to all learners. An integrated long-term joint strategy for education envisions transforming existing programmes, embedding European values, using ground-breaking pedagogical approaches, employing infrastructures, human capital, and exploiting synergies of inter-regional collaboration to accelerate regional green and digital transitions.

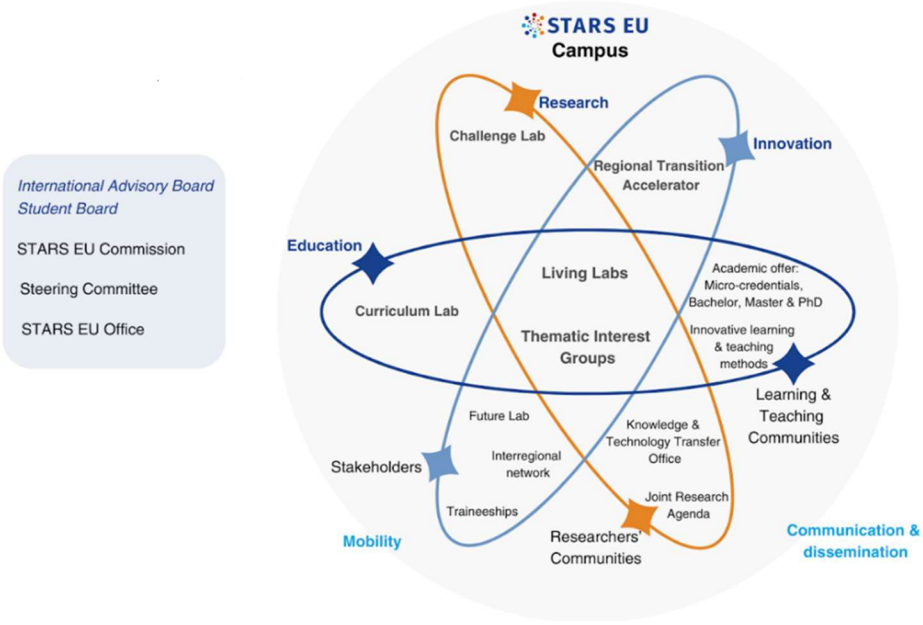
STARS EU focuses on inter-regional collaboration seeking to promote the exchange of ideas, people and innovation in both education and research. The STARS EU Community is made up of nearly 200,000 people who share our values: freedom, democracy, justice, equality and solidarity, and a commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development goals. The legacy of STARS EU will be its transferable model of engagement that will greatly facilitate the transition to a green and digital future-ready economy

## Participating Universities

- Hanze University of Applied Sciences - HUAS (The Netherlands)
- University of La Laguna – ULL (Spain)
- Bragança Polytechnic University - IPB (Portugal)
- Hochschule Bremen – City University of Applied Sciences – HSB (Germany)
- Silesian University in Opava - SUO (Czechia)
- University West - UW (Sweden)
- Cracow University of Technology - CUT (Poland)
- Marie et Louis Pasteur University – UMLP (France)
- Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës – UAMD (Albania)

## STARS EU in figures

## STARS EU Ecosystem




## Work Package 7: STARS EU Sustainable Model

The nine universities that make up STARS EU are willing to learn from each other to improve the quality of education and research, as well as to help strengthen Europe and promote its values. This commitment is reinforced by the alliance's sustainability strategy (WP7). The strategy will reinforce the Alliance's commitment beyond 2027.

STARS EU Sustainable Model work package was designed considering the following objectives:

- To enable STARS EU to occupy a prominent position in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as an innovative and structural model of best practice to further increase the quality, international competitiveness, and attractiveness of the European higher education landscape, in education, research and innovation, and service to society, considering the SDGs and the present and future challenges of digital and green transition
- To ensure sustainable, diverse and inclusive inter-institutional cooperation between STARS EU alliance partners implementing long-term strategy and deepening, intensifying and expanding this collaboration.
- To act as a role model for other alliances demonstrating deep, extensive and long-term inter-institutional cooperation and ensuring the generation of real European added value by achieving critical mass on a European scale through the long-term commitment of all involved higher education institutions and external stakeholders.

To achieve these objectives, WP7 consists of five key tasks that will help build the STARS EU cooperation model, each of these tasks addressing a key dimension of long-term cooperation.

The specific tasks of WP7: STARS EU Sustainable Model are as follows:

- T7.1 Improve and expand structure of the STARS European University Governance model / Stars EU Governance Charter.
- T7.2 The Alliance Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan
- T7.3 Develop the STARS EU Green Impact Plan
- T7.4 Develop the STARS EU Sustainable Funding Plan
- T7.5 Monitoring, Revision and Development of the long-term strategy for STARS EU including the implementation Roadmap

### Task 7.2. The Alliance Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan

The STARS EU alliance is fully committed to promote Gender equality, diversity and inclusion within all the partners and has included a specific task (7.2) in the project devoted to fostering and disseminating them among the teaching, administrative staff as well as students and stakeholders.

The task consists mainly of designing and implementing a GEDI action plan that will serve as a guide for the STARS EU alliance's actions in the coming years and its goal is to promotes gender equality, inclusiveness, diversity and equity while boosting the excellence dimension of higher education, research, innovation and service to society.

One of the first steps in this direction was the creation of the STARS EU Gender Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI) panel of discussion (Task 7.2.1). The second step was to assess the existing gender equality and inclusion plans in each partner HEI (Task 7.2.2) to find common needs and barriers as well as best practices to be shared among the partners. Once the conclusions of the analysis of each university's plans and policies were obtained, the GEDI working group focused on the discussion, planning and adoption of the Alliance's GEDI strategy and the set of specific measures for 2025-2027 included in this action plan (Task 7.2.3).

The following steps comprise Piloting the GEDI plan (Task 7.2.4) starting a test series with a list of prioritised actions. This will allow us to evaluate its impact and propose recommendations for improvement. The recommendations will be incorporated into the review and update to be carried out at the end of the first year of implementation of this plan (Task 7.2.5). Once the plan is fully implemented, a new evaluation will be conducted, and a set of recommendations will be proposed (Task 7.2.6) that will serve as the basis for the development of the STARS EU Alliance's long-term sustainable model. (The following figure summarizes the main steps of task 7.2).

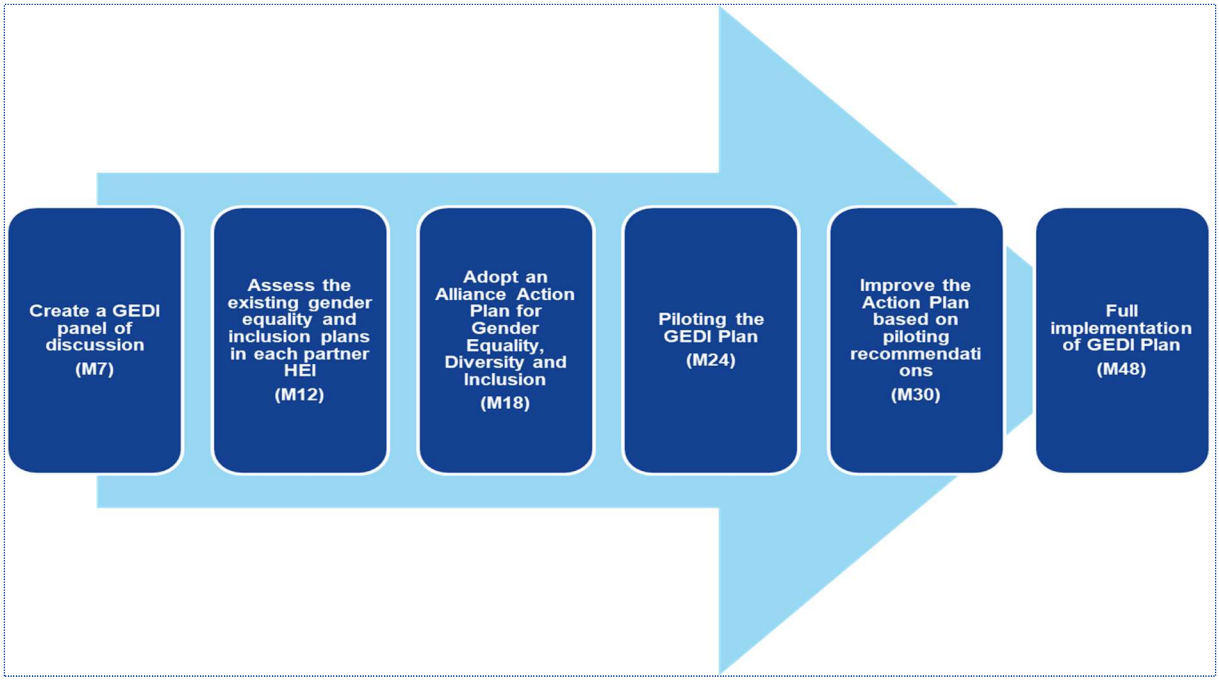


Figure 1: Steps 2024-2027

# STARS EU commitment to Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

The European University Alliances represent a transformative initiative within the framework of European Higher Education, fostering transnational cooperation, academic mobility, and pedagogical innovation to build a more cohesive, inclusive, and sustainable European Education Area.

At the heart of this transformation lies a strong commitment to the fundamental values of the European Union: equality, diversity, inclusion, justice, freedom, and respect for human rights, as well as to international commitments to sustainable development and social inclusion.

In this context, the promotion of Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) is recognised as a structuring and cross-cutting dimension essential to ensuring that all individuals — students, academic staff, researchers, technical and administrative personnel, applicants, institutional partners, and surrounding communities — can fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from academic and scientific life under conditions of equity, dignity, and safety.

The European Commission, in its *Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025,* reaffirms its commitment to building a Union in which all people, in all their diversity, enjoy equal opportunities to thrive and to lead on equal terms:

*"The goal is a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead our European society."*[1]

The Commission's strategy also intersects with the digital transition and green transformation in education, advocating for more inclusive institutions open to diversity and committed to fostering a fair and equitable academic and professional environment.

Accordingly, European University Alliances are encouraged to develop Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) Action Plans as an integral part of their commitment to academic excellence, territorial cohesion, social innovation, and intergenerational justice — ultimately contributing to a fairer and more accessible European Education Area.

In parallel, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[2] provide a global reference framework for sustainable development by 2030. Therefore, European University Alliances are also expected to align their GEDI Plans with the 2030 Agenda SDGs:

### ☑ SDG 1 – No Poverty

*"End poverty in all its forms everywhere."*

Higher education institutions and European University Alliances have a fundamental role in promoting upward social mobility, equitable access to higher education, and creating economic and social support mechanisms for students and staff in vulnerable situations.

### ☑ SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being

*"Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages."*

It includes promoting physical and mental health in academic environments, focusing on healthy work and study environments, burnout prevention, and psychological well-being, especially for international students, minorities, and people in vulnerable situations.

### ☑ SDG 4 – Quality Education

*"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."*

This is one of the core missions of all Higher Education Institutions. Inclusion and equality are central to ensuring that all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social background, identity, disability or migration status, have equal access to educational and training opportunities.

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[1] European Commission. (2020). *A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025* [COM(2020) 152 final]. Brussels: European Commission. Available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152

[2] United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Resolution A/RES/70/1). New York: United Nations General Assembly. Available at https://sdgs.un.org/goals

### ☑ SDG 5 – Gender Equality

*"Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."*

It includes combating discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence, as well as promoting equitable representation in leadership positions and in science.

### ☑ SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

*"Reduce inequality within and among countries."*

It refers to creating policies and practices that promote inter-institutional, inter-regional and international equity — highly relevant in the context of alliances that bring together institutions with different levels of development and socioeconomic contexts.

### ☑ SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

*"Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."*

As institutional actors, STARS EU must guarantee participatory, transparent and fair governance, contributing to social cohesion, democratic culture, respect for human rights and active citizenship.

Also, as part of UNESCO's agenda for sustainable education development, it reinforces that higher education must promote empowerment, cultural and social diversity, active citizenship and intergenerational justice, assuming itself as a global public good. Higher education is a public good that must be accessible, inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

In the document "Education for Sustainable Development: A roadmap"[3], it states that:

*"Education for Sustainable Development empowers people with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours to live in a way that is good for the environment, economy, and society."*

In its "Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education"[4]:

*"Convinced that this Convention will promote international mobility, as well as communication and cooperation regarding fair and transparent procedures for recognition, and quality assurance and academic integrity in higher education at a global level".*

In this context, the elaboration and implementation of a Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan by STARS EU is an ethical imperative and a strategy for strengthening institutional cohesion, social innovation and academic excellence.

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[3] UNESCO. (2020). *Education for Sustainable Development: A roadmap*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
Available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374802

[4] UNESCO. (2019). *Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370905

Therefore, this plan aims to translate the commitments made into concrete actions, contributing to more just, participatory, sustainable institutions aligned with our time's significant challenges.

# Mission, Vision and Values

## Mission

Promote an inclusive, collaborative and equitable European academic ecosystem that values diversity and ensures gender equality across all institutions that make up the alliance. Through an inter-institutional and transnational approach, we commit to integrating the principles of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion principles into teaching, research, and governance practices, as well as respecting partner universities[5] identity and regional contexts. We aim to create equal opportunities for all, regardless of background, identity or status, contributing to academic excellence and positive social impact across Europe.

## Vision

To be a European reference in promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education, ensuring that all institutions in the STARS EU alliance provide a respectful, accessible and discrimination-free environment. We aim to drive social and academic transformation, promoting innovative and sustainable policies that reinforce social cohesion and regional development of the communities where each institution is located. Through transnational cooperation, we aspire to foster a culture of inclusion and social justice that strengthens the role of universities in building a more equitable and innovative World.

## Values

### 1. Equality and Equity

Equality ensures that all people have access to the same opportunities, while equity recognises that different groups may need other support to achieve the same outcomes. This principle requires the elimination of structural barriers and implementing policies that guarantee fairness in academic and professional access, progression, and recognition.

[5] UNESCO. (2020). *Education for Sustainable Development: A roadmap*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
Available at https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374802

SDG associates:

• SDG 1 – No Poverty: reduce inequalities in access to higher education.

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: promote equitable and inclusive access.

• SDG 5 – Gender Equality: eliminate gender-based inequalities.

• SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: combat exclusion and discrimination in all forms.

## 2. DIVERSITY

Diversity recognises, values and celebrates differences between people and groups, including, but not limited to, gender, ethnic-racial origin, age, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, socioeconomic status or life trajectory. A diverse STARS EU is more prosperous, more creative and more representative of the society it serves. Promoting diversity contributes to a more innovative and enriching environment, fostering different perspectives in teaching, research and governance.

SDG associates:

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: ensure an inclusive education system.

• SDG 5 – Gender Equality: promote gender diversity at all levels.

• SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: ensure respect and representation of marginalised groups.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: promoting inclusive societies and representative institutions.

## 3. INCLUSION

Inclusion consists of ensuring that all people can participate fully in the academic and social life of STARS EU, eliminating discrimination and creating a safe and accessible environment. It is not enough to recognise diversity; it is necessary to promote everyone's participation actively.

SDG associates:

• SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being: ensure adequate physical and mental conditions for full participation.

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: promote inclusive access at all levels of education.

• SDG 5 – Gender Equality: combat gender-based exclusions.

• SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: ensure full inclusion of all groups.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: building accessible, accountable and inclusive institutions.

## 4. Social Responsibility

Social responsibility implies the commitment of STARS EU to the common good, promoting practices that contribute to social cohesion, justice, sustainable development and respect for human rights. This value reinforces the transformative role of STARS EU in society, both locally and globally.

SDG associates:

• SDG 1 – No Poverty: combat economic inequalities through knowledge.

• SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being: contributing to community and institutional health.

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: promote education as a public good.

• SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: acting as an agent of social inclusion.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: strengthening social trust in institutions.

## 5. Transparency and Accountability

This value refers to STARS EU's ethical and transparent management, accountability to the academic community and society, and open access to information and decision-making processes. Transparency reinforces trust in institutions, while responsibility implies acting with integrity, equity and respect for the commitments made.

Transparency ensures that institutional decisions are made in an open and accessible manner, promoting trust within the academic community.

Accountability involves continually evaluating policies and practices to align with equality, diversity and inclusion principles.

SDG associates:

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: promote effective and participatory governance systems.

• SDG 5 – Gender Equality: ensure transparent mechanisms against discrimination and harassment.

• SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: enable equal participation in institutional processes.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: promoting inclusive, transparent and accountable institutions.

## 6. Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises that different forms of discrimination - such as those based on gender, race, class, disability, sexual orientation or immigration status - do not act in isolation but in an interconnected way, creating unique experiences of inequality and exclusion. Incorporating an intersectional perspective into STARS EU policies allows for fairer, more sensitive and effective responses to the complexity of people's lived realities, ensuring that no identity is invisible.

SDG associates:

• SDG 1 – No Poverty: recognise how multiple disadvantages affect access to education.

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: ensure equal opportunities in a system sensitive to social intersections.

• SDG 5 – Gender Equality: include the cross-cutting impact of gender with other identities.

• SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities: addressing multiple and accumulated inequalities.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: developing inclusive and representative policies.

## 7. Innovation and Social Sustainability

Innovation and social sustainability refer to the ability to generate knowledge, solutions and transformative practices that respond to contemporary social challenges, ensuring social justice, equity and cohesion in the long term. This value reinforces the role of STARS EU as an agent of social, economic and environmental change, promoting sustainable development models centred on people and communities.

SDG associates:

• SDG 1 – No Poverty: develop innovative solutions to combat social exclusion.

• SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being: innovating for physical, mental and community health.

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: promote inclusive and socially relevant pedagogical methods.

• SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities: promote equality through social innovation.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: creating inclusive solutions for democratic governance.

## 8. Democratic Values

Democratic values - such as freedom, equality, justice, solidarity, participation and respect for human rights - are fundamental pillars of the European Universities initiative mission. Promoting these values means guaranteeing free and plural expression spaces, fostering civic participation and ensuring institutional decisions are based on inclusive, transparent and representative processes.

SDG associates:

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: ensure an education that promotes global and democratic citizenship.

• SDG 5 – Gender Equality: reinforce equality as a democratic principle.

• SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: ensure full and equal participation in democratic processes.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: building institutions based on the rule of law, participation and human rights.

## 9. MULTILINGUALISM

Multilingualism promotes the coexistence and appreciation of multiple languages in the academic space, contributing to inclusion, equity, mobility and the recognition of cultural and linguistic identities. It recognises the value of linguistic diversity and its role in building a cohesive and accessible European academic space.

In STARS EU, multilingualism is essential to ensure intercultural communication, equitable access to knowledge and the active participation of all academic communities, regardless of their linguistic origin.

SDG associates:

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: Ensure inclusive access to teaching and learning in different languages.

• SDG 5 – Gender Equality: ensure that language barriers do not exacerbate existing inequalities.

• SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: promote the recognition of languages as an expression of diversity and identity.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: promoting accessible and respectful communication in multicultural and multilingual contexts.

## 10. GREEN TRANSITION

Green transition refers to STARS EU's commitment to environmental sustainability, carbon neutrality, ecosystem protection and climate justice. This value recognises that the climate crisis is also a social crisis and requires a structural transformation in production, consumption, mobility, teaching and research modes. Academia is central to leading the just ecological transition by educating, innovating and collaborating with communities for a sustainable future. Climate justice must be integrated into equality policies, ensuring everyone benefits from a sustainable and resilient environment.

SDG associates:

• SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being: recognise the environmental impact on the health conditions of populations.

• SDG 4 – Quality Education: Empowering all people for sustainable and conscious practices.

• SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities: ensure the green transition leaves no one behind.

• SDG 13 – Climate Action: urgently combat climate change.

• SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: promoting sustainable and fair decisions in institutional policies.

# 2. Initial Analysis

To develop this action plan, an analysis and evaluation of the existing plans in each university of the alliance was carried out, the results of which were presented to those responsible for the design of the plan (The results of the analysis are presented in Annexe I). Cases of good practices have also been identified based on the existing plans at each university, the main results of which can be found in Annex II. In addition, the coordinating team designed and shared a template for the collection of relevant information from the partners. The data collected were also used for the initial analysis. The analysis of the plans, best practices and the additional information obtained from the partners has revealed a series of common points, differences, obstacles and possibilities for improvement that have served as a basis for the prioritization, ideation and design of the actions in this plan.

This section summarises the main highlights obtained during the analysis process.

### Main Highlights

All participating institutions prioritize gender equality as a cornerstone of their organizational strategies.

All Alliance universities have strategic and management tools to promote equal opportunities and equity. Although each institution presents important differences, which in turn have to do with the different cultural and legal contexts of the universities. In all cases, the 9 universities have specific strategies to promote gender equality, which are reflected in the equality plans and strategies of each university.

There is a lack of integration in equality, diversity and inclusion policies.

Not all universities in the alliance have a GEDI/EDI plan or strategy. All have tools to promote diversity or inclusion, but they are often fragmented programs, initiatives or actions, lacking joint governance. HUAS stands out as having a global unit Participation, Diversity & Inclusion office & Taskforce D&I

Towards a gender-balanced universities

Important achievements in the area of gender equality, such as **Gender balance in leadership and decision-making**, **Gender equality in recruitment and career progression**. Universities such as HSB, IPB, ULL or UW among others have achieved parity governance teams, but much work remains to be done.

Support for people with disabilities should be promoted in a more integrated way to foster real equal opportunities.

In general, all universities have services and tools to support universal accessibility, both physical and digital, but they do not usually have explicit strategies, which hinders real transformation. Focus on infrastructure improvements, assistive technology, and inclusive teaching methods.

### Encouraging participation from groups with fewer opportunities and underrepresented groups, to foster an inclusive academic environment.

Although all universities have initiatives in place to support people with fewer opportunities, it is essential to incorporate new measures and policies to advance equal opportunities and equity. Encouraging participation from groups with fewer opportunities and underrepresented groups, including national minorities, migrants, and asylum seekers, to foster an inclusive academic environment. Also, including people who, due to their geographical condition, have fewer opportunities, as often happens with universities in non-central regions, as is the case in many of the regions where the universities of the Alliance are located.

## Case Studies of Success

This section presents a general picture of GEDI best practices and success stories from STARS EU member universities. Each institution demonstrates significant progress in integrating gender equality and inclusivity across education, research, and governance.

### Hanze University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands)

Hanze UAS integrates gender equality in leadership planning, hiring, and curriculum design. It maintains dedicated equality officers, institutional monitoring, and community-driven activities such as Women's Day events and mentorship programs across faculties.

### University of La Laguna (Spain)

The University of La Laguna (ULL) is a pioneer in gender equality in higher education, with its comprehensive Gender Equality Plan 2022–2026. Best practices include the establishment of a Gender Equality Unit, inclusive language training, work-life balance initiatives, and student engagement programs. ULL also achieved AENOR certification for both gender equality management and pay equity.

### Bragança Polytechnic University (Portugal)

IPB maintains gender balance in students and staff and has institutionalized equality via CIGID. Key successes include equitable hiring, support for work-life balance, and intersectional outreach in teaching, research, and public policy.

### Hochschule Bremen – City University of Applied Sciences (Germany)

HSB's GEP (2023–2027) emphasizes STEM participation for women, mentoring programs like makeMINT, and institutional measures such as anti-discrimination statutes. It supports students with family obligations and promotes inclusive academic culture through staff training and public outreach.

### Silesian University in Opava (Czechia)

Silesian University in Opava follows a robust Equal Opportunities Policy aligned with HR Excellence guidelines. Initiatives include the establishment of an ombudsman, anonymous reporting channels, and structured ethical practices in hiring and career advancement. They received the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2021.

### University West (Sweden)

University West embeds gender equality into its sustainability and strategic planning framework. It has implemented inclusive curriculum reforms, faculty gender balance goals, and protective measures against harassment. It is recognized for inclusive campus planning and broad intersectional integration.

### Cracow University of Technology (Poland)

Cracow University demonstrates a strong commitment to ethical conduct, inclusivity, and community support through comprehensive policies that guide its academic and administrative practices. Best practices include upholding core ethical values such as truth, dignity, and responsibility; ensuring accessibility for individuals with special needs across architectural, digital, and communicative domains; and actively combating discrimination and mobbing through structured reporting, mediation, and support systems. Though specific success stories are not detailed, the existence of robust frameworks and proactive implementation reflects the university's dedication to fostering a fair, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of its academic community.

### Marie et Louis Pasteur University (France)

ULMP focuses on structural gender reforms through national alignment. Initiatives include the Cellule SOS reporting platform, transparency in pay gap analysis, and inclusive career support. The university is known for its regional leadership and evidence-based reforms.

### Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës (Albania)

UAMD focuses on integrating gender equality into leadership, research, and institutional culture. Successes include flexible working policies, dedicated gender equality units, and inclusive decision-making practices. They operate under a comprehensive GEP aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda.

## Recommendations

The following are some of the basic recommendations drawn from the discussion of the plans and their analysis.

### Addressing main barriers:

- Promote equal opportunities: Ensure that all people, regardless of their origin, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, ethnicity or any other personal characteristic, have access to the same opportunities for development and success.

- Reduce discrimination and inequalities: Actively work to reduce any form of discrimination, harassment or exclusion, and promote fair treatment for all members of the organization or community.
- Create an inclusive environment: Develop an environment where all people feel accepted, valued and supported. This may involve policies and practices that facilitate the integration of people with different abilities, religions, ages, among others.
- Community Engagement: Involve students, staff, and external stakeholders in discussions and decision-making processes to build collective ownership of GEDI objectives.
- Lower presence and participation of women in scientific careers. There is still a significant horizontal segregation by degree, with a lower presence of women in some disciplines linked to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) or PECS (Physics, Engineering, Computer, Science) areas. Encourage a greater presence of men in studies with a high presence of women (nursing, education).

**Awareness and Understanding:**

- Understand foundational concepts around gender equality and the benefits of diversity and inclusion.
- Undertake regular unconscious bias training to be aware of blindspots
- Transversalize the gender perspective in teaching and research.
- Cultural Shifts: Foster an institutional culture that celebrates diversity through regular events, communication campaigns, and the establishment of diversity councils.

**Talent Management :**

- Invest in professional development opportunities, networking and mentoring for people with less opportunities.
- Promote diversity. Diversity of perspectives and experiences can drive creativity and innovation.
- Improve well-being and satisfaction: An inclusive and diverse environment improves people's overall well-being, enhancing their motivation, loyalty and satisfaction.

# 3. Goals & Objectives

## STARS EU Long-Term Goals

Our GEDI Action Plan is not only intended to be the benchmark for action until 2027, it will also form the basis of the STARS EU Alliance's long-term strategy and its consolidation as a European University of reference. This plan will help to build and delimit the long-term goals, which we have already started to envision and whose main points are set out in this section.

In the process of developing a joint vision for European universities in 2037, the STARS EU Alliance is setting long-term goals for more inclusive, fair, cohesive and inclusive universities and societies.

STARS EU's long-term strategy wants to contribute to achieving the following goals, which define the spirit of our alliance.

1) **Equal access to higher education:**

   - Ensure that all people have equal opportunities for access to higher education programs, especially those who are historically vulnerable (such as low-income people, ethnic communities, migrants, people with disabilities, refugees, among others).

2) **Diversity on campus:**

   - Encourage the integration of students, teachers, researchers from diverse cultures, ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations and socioeconomic backgrounds, creating a multicultural and pluralistic environment.
   - Develop extracurricular activities and projects that promote cultural exchange and mutual respect.

3) **Inclusive curricula:**

   - Update curricula to reflect the perspectives and experiences of different social groups, promoting a more diverse and inclusive education.
   - Incorporate content related to gender equality, cultural diversity, human rights, and social equity into educational programs.

4) **Elimination of all forms of discrimination:**

   - Implement clear and effective policies against any form of discrimination, harassment or violence in the university environment.

5) **Staff training and awareness:**

- Train academic, administrative and support staff on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, so that they can identify and address situations of discrimination or inequality within the classroom.
- Promote the creation of inclusive pedagogical strategies that respect and value differences.

6) **Promotion of gender equity:**

- Implement measures that promote gender equality in higher education, both in student participation and in the hiring and promotion processes for academic and managerial staff.
- Promote a gender mainstreaming perspective in all areas of study, especially in disciplines traditionally dominated by a single gender (e.g., engineering, computer science, nursing, etc.).
- Improve and promote the participation of men in equality discussion forums.

7) **Adaptation of infrastructures and tools for students with disabilities:**

- Ensure accessible academic facilities and resources for students with disabilities, such as adapted spaces, assistive technologies and accessible study materials.
- Guarantee universal access to technological resources.

In conclusion, these goals aim to improve the educational quality and learning conditions at STARS EU universities by ensuring the rights are respected and the full development of students, faculty, research, technical and administrative staff is promoted, helping to create a higher education space where all individuals, regardless of their differences, can have access to the same opportunities for training and growth.

# 2025-2027 GEDI Plan Objectives

This plan, which will be developed on a pilot basis between 2025 and 2027, pursues a series of specific objectives. Achieving these objectives will help STARS EU universities not only to build a more inclusive and equitable environment, but also to enhance their innovative capacity, excellence and social responsibility.

The objectives of STARS EU GEDI Action Plan are as follows:

1. To foster a culture oriented towards equity, diversity and inclusion within STARS EU Alliance.
2. To promote GEDI mainstreaming in the Alliance.
3. To raise awareness of existing barriers and forms of discrimination in higher education.
4. To promote an inclusive ecosystem where all researchers, students, professors and staff can develop their potential, regardless of gender, origin, religion, sexual orientation or social status.
5. To generate mechanisms for cooperation and exchange of experiences among universities in the alliance, reinforcing mutual inspiration and motivation.
6. To provide opportunities for students and staff to participate in specific Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity related training and activities.

# 4. Target Groups

The STARS EU GEDI plan has been developed for all Alliance universities and is aimed at the university community as a whole: students, researchers, faculty, administrative staff. In addition, the plan also seeks to have an impact at the local and regional level and aims to reach a wider audience by expanding activities and impact towards society (families, associations, external stakeholders).

Moreover, it is crucial that the plan not only addresses diversity in the student body, but also promotes an inclusive environment for all members of the institution, creating a culture that celebrates differences and promotes equity at all levels.

Four main target groups have been identified for this GEDI plan and the actions it envisages, organized as follows:

### 1) STUDENTS (ALL LEVELS):

- **Students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds:** It is essential to promote an environment where students of different ethnicities, religions and cultures feel welcome and represented.

- **Students of different genders:** Promote gender equality by addressing the needs and rights of people of all genders, including transgender and non-binary students.

- **Students from different social backgrounds:** Ensure that students from different socioeconomic backgrounds have access to the same educational opportunities, scholarships and supports.

- **Students with Disabilities:** Ensure that students with disabilities, whether physical, sensory, cognitive or emotional, have access to the same resources, educational opportunities and support as their peers.

- **International and migrant students:** Create an inclusive environment for students from other countries that facilitates their adaptation and participation in academic life.

- **LGBTI students:** Create an inclusive environment that respects sexual and gender diversity, ensuring the safety and well-being of LGBTI student**.**

### 2) TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF:

- **Teachers from diverse disciplines:** It is necessary to ensure that teachers, researchers and academics understand the importance of gender equality, equity, inclusion and diversity in their teaching methods, materials and pedagogical approach.

- **Teachers from different cultural and gender backgrounds:** Encourage diverse representation in the academic staff to provide role models for students**.**

### 3) ADMINISTRATIVE, TECHNICAL AND SUPPORT STAFF:

- **Student services, orientation and wellness staff:** This group plays an essential role in implementing inclusive policies and must be trained in diversity and inclusion to provide appropriate support to students.

- **General administrative staff:** It is essential that the staff is sensitized on gender equality, inclusion and diversity, implementing fair and equitable practices.

### 4) EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES, INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

- **Alumni Network**: Engage alumni to act as ambassadors of diversity and inclusion, supporting access to professional networks and collaborating in the promotion of equal opportunities in the labor market.

- **Local and regional communities**: Universities have a link to their environment, so will also work to include nearby communities in building an inclusive and diverse environment.

- **Governments and educational authorities:** Collaborate with government policies and regulations at all levels to ensure compliance with regulations on equity, accessibility and non-discrimination in higher education.

- **Non-governmental organizations and student associations**: Collaborate with external groups and entities that defend the rights of historically vulnerable groups, seeking mutual support in the implementation of the GEDI plan.

# 5. Actions and Measures

The GEDI Action plan includes specific actions to promote gender equality and inclusion across all aspects of academic life, research and contribution to the regions.

The actions foreseen in this plan will be planned in detail among the partners responsible for the implementation of the plan and in coordination with the cooperation structures of the Alliance. They will be continuously evaluated and adapted to the specific needs of the partners. Also, a wide flexibility has been foreseen in the development of the actions by each partner so that they can be incorporated in their activities in an autonomous way and not interfere negatively in the strategies of each university of the alliance related with gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

| **Action 1** | **GEDI Website section** |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Develop a section on the STARS EU website to disseminate all the actions of the Alliance related to the promotion and support of equality, inclusion and diversity. |
| **Timeline** | 2025 (Semester II) |
| **Indicators** | Number of items hosted on the web<br>Number of visits to the GEDI section of the STARS EU website |

| | **Creation and publication of a list of support resources on equality, diversity and inclusion available at each partner university for dissemination and awareness.** |
|---|---|
| **Timeline** | 2025 (Semester I) |
| **Indicators** | Number of people who have visited the list of resources on the STARS EU web site.<br>Number of people who value the publication of the publication positively |

| **Action 3** | **GEDI guidelines for STARS EU community** |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Developing common GEDI guidelines for STARS EU community and fostering their use among the partner universities |
| **Timeline** | 2026 (Semester I) |
| **Indicators** | Number of actions to disseminate the use of the guidelines<br>Number of people familiar with the guidelines |

| Action 4 | Gallery of Women in Sciences |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Alliance universities will select two individuals each to be interviewed for their role and contribution to the field of science, facilitating the creation of female role models. The interviews will be published on STARS and the partner universities' own dissemination channels. The 18 interviews will be published jointly in a catalogue in February 2026 as part of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. |
| **Timeline** | 2025 (Semester 2) - 2026 (Semester 1) |
| **Indicators** | Number of interviews collected and disseminated.<br>Number of people reached by the publication of the interviews |

| Action 5 | STARS EU GEDI DAYS |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Organization and celebration of the STARS EU GEDI days in all STARS universities with several activities, both online and physical. The days will be held simultaneously in all universities of the alliance. This program of activities will offer the opportunity to participate in sensitization and awareness activities and discussions on equality-related topics |
| **Timeline** | 2026 (Semester 1) First Edition<br>2027 (Dates TBC) Second Edition |
| **Indicators** | Number of activities carried out in the framework of GEDI days<br>Number of people reached<br>Level of satisfaction of the participants with the activities carried out |

| Action 6 | GEDI Awareness Campaingns |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Actions to celebrate and recognize equity, diversity and inclusion on key days to promote the alliance's commitment. On key days (International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Zero Discrimination Day, International Women's Day, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, European Diversity Month, International Day for Tolerance, International Day of Persons with Disabilities), micro-campaigns will be carried out in networks. |
| **Timeline** | 2025, 2026, 2027 |
| **Indicators** | Number of campaigns organized<br>Number of universities involved<br>Number of people reached by campaigns |

| Action 7 | The game of stereotypes |
|---|---|
| Description | Design and launch of an online game to uncover our stereotypes. The game will provide information about different cultures, genders and social groups to challenge preconceived ideas and foster understanding and will help stimulate critical thinking by challenging players to question and analyse the stereotypes they encounter in their daily lives. In turn, it will help celebrate diversity and promote inclusion by showcasing the richness of different identities and experiences. |
| Timeline | 2027 (Semester I) |
| Indicators | Number of games created<br>Number of people who have played the game |

| Action 8 | #BreakTheBias Challenge |
|---|---|
| Description | Campaign in social media where students/teachers/staff/researchers share how they challenge stereotypes. The aim is to inspire them to adopt more inclusive and respectful behaviours in their daily lives. |
| Timeline | 2026 (Semester I and II) |
| Indicators | Number of items created and disseminated<br>Number of views in networks |

| Action 9 | Spaces for GEDI Dialogue |
|---|---|
| Description | Holding discussion forums where the STARS EU community can share their experiences and suggestions on GEDI issues. |
| Timeline | 2026, 2027 |
| Indicators | Number of forums held<br>Number of people involved in the forums<br>Level of satisfaction with the activities carried out |

| Action 10 | Technical support for STARS EU programmes and actions to incorporate the GEDI principles |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Collaborate with STARS EU cooperation structures in the development of all actions and in the creation of outcomes to ensure that programmes and outcomes comply with the principles of gender equality, diversity and tolerance. |
| **Timeline** | 2025, 2026, 2027 |
| **Indicators** | Number of intellectual products developed under the GEDI principles |

| Action 11 | Collaboration with civil society organisations (NGOs) |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Promote alliances at local, regional and European level with social and civil organisations to promote equity, diversity and inclusion outside the university community with the aim of generating cooperation mechanisms and strengthening networks and collaborations with civil society entities. |
| **Timeline** | 2025, 2026, 2027 |
| **Indicators** | Number of external organisations involved<br>Number of activities organised with civil society organisations |

| Action 12 | Cultural actions to celebrate diversity |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Organise activities to celebrate the different cultures, traditions and experiences that STAR EU members bring to the alliance.<br>A series of videos will be created showcasing traditions, cultural expressions typical of the regions/countries of the alliance to celebrate the diversity of STARS EU. (show cooking, dances, etc) |
| **Timeline** | 2026-2027 |
| **Indicators** | Number of cultural activities organised<br>Number of videos published on STARS EU channels<br>Number of people impacted by the cultural activities |

| Action 13 | STARS EU GEDI Strategy - After 2027 |
|---|---|
| **Description** | Development of STARS EU's long-term GEDI strategy. To this end, stakeholders will be involved, discussion and reflection groups will be organized for the joint definition of the Alliance's strategy on gender, equity, diversity and inclusion. |
| **Timeline** | 2027 (Semester II) |
| **Indicators** | Number of people involved in the development of the strategy in the long term<br>Number of universities committed |

# 6. Timeline

This action plan runs from May 2025 to December 2027.

The approximate execution date for each of the actions in this plan is shown graphically below.

| | | 2025 | | | | | | | | 2026 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2027 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action | Description | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Ago | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dic | Ene | Feb | Mar | April | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| 1 | GEDI Website section | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | List of GEDI supporting resources within the Alliance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | GEDI guidelines for STARS EU community | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Gallery of Women in Sciences | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | STARS EU GEDI DAYS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | GEDI Awareness Campaingns | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | The game of stereotypes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | #BreakTheBias Challenge | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Spaces for GEDI Dialogue | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Technical support for STARS EU initiatives | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Collaboration with civil society organisations (NGOs) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Cultural actions to celebrate diversity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | STARS EU GEDI Strategy - After 2027 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| GEN | Monitoring and Evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| GEN | Management | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| GEN | Dissemination | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 2: Planned timeline

# 7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the equality, diversity and inclusion plan are crucial elements to ensure that objectives are being met effectively and to identify areas for improvement.

Our GEDI plan envisages monitoring and evaluation as a continuous and dynamic process, which ensures that the plan remains relevant, effective and adapted to the changing needs of our organisations and the regions in which they are located.

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the plan will help to adjust and optimise the Alliance's gender, equality, diversity and inclusion strategies, facilitating the achievement of the plan's goal that all members benefit from a more inclusive and diverse environment.

The main steps of the process that partners will implement to monitor and evaluate the STARS EU GEDI plan are detailed below.

1) **Establishment of the monitoring and evaluation committee.**

Each partner of the STARS EU Alliance has designated a responsible team for the monitoring and evaluation of the plan. In turn, the alliance has a panel of GEDI experts made up of representatives from all the universities, who will be responsible for analysing the results obtained in the evaluations.

2) **Definition of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).**

These are the specific indicators that will be used to measure progress. A set of indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, has been established to help measure the progress made and the success of the actions implemented.

3) **Data collection.**

In order to evaluate progress, data collection is foreseen on an ongoing basis. Data collection will serve as a basis for monitoring progress. Data collection will be done mainly through 1) the collection and analysis of internal data provided by the participating organisations and 2) surveys and interviews with participants in the actions of the plan as well as with involved staff, experts, and stakeholders. In addition, an Excel file will be created in a collaborative format that will be used to compile the data and will be the main reference for monitoring by all partners and at alliance level.

4) **Carrying out periodic evaluations.**

To measure the progress of the established indicators, six-monthly reviews of the plan and the objectives achieved have been scheduled. These reviews will not only measure progress but will also verify whether the plan's activities are being implemented correctly. This continuous monitoring will help to ensure that initiatives are properly implemented and that proposed adjustments are effectively applied.

5) **Analysis of results and reporting**.

The results will be analysed in the periodic six-monthly evaluation. The analysis will allow comparison of the results obtained with the objectives and targets previously established and will also serve to identify trends, achievements and areas for improvement. At the end of each evaluation period, a report will be presented and shared with the Alliance members, the discussion panel and the groups involved in the process.

6) **Communication of results and actions taken**.

It is essential to share the results of the evaluation with both decision-makers and the different groups involved in both the evaluation process and the development of the proposed actions.

7) **Review and updates of the plan**.

A review of the plan will be carried out annually to make any necessary adjustments to the approach and activities foreseen. It will also allow for detailed planning of activities for the following period. At the end of the first year (April 2026) a report with recommendations for further strategy development will be published and the action plan will be updated according to the recommendations resulting from the pilot implementation of the plan.

At the end of the second year of implementation of the action plan (April 2027), a comprehensive review will take place. The aim of this review is to assess the effectiveness of the measures and to support the design of the STARS EU Alliance's long-term strategy (2035) on gender equality, diversity and inclusion. To this end, the experiences and opinions of various target groups, representatives of the Alliance's universities as well as the members of the panel discussion will be collected and analysed, and a final evaluation will be carried out in order to set new objectives and commitments, implement future improvements and generate recommendations for STARS EU's long-term strategy. This process will involve representatives from all participating organisations.

# Annexes

# Annexe I: Institutional strategies to ensure gender equality, diversity, equity and inclusion - Questionnaire

# Developing STARS EU GEDI Plan

## Institutional strategies to ensure gender equality, diversity, equity and inclusion.

This questionnaire has been generated with the intention of gathering from each of the STARS EU partners key elements for the development of our GEDI plan. This information will help us to better understand what each partner does and will complement the analysis already performed.

Please complete all sections concisely and clearly. We have added a section at the end in case there are highlights that have not been covered in this questionnaire.

DEADLINE: Monday, March 3rd 2025

Thank you for your support.

1) **Does your university have an integrated plan for the promotion of gender equality, diversity, equity and inclusion?**
    a. Yes, the plan contemplates all the elements: gender equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.
    b. No, the plan focuses only on gender equality. For the promotion of diversity and inclusion we have other tools, but they are not integrated in the plan.
    c. No, there are a number of specific plans covering different areas or elements.
    d. Another answer. Specify

2) **What is the effective period of the current plan?**

3) **Year of implementation of the first plan**

4) **List the main areas of action of the current plan**

5) **Describe the main institutional actions for the promotion of gender equality**

6) **Explain what measures your institution has implemented to promote diversity and inclusion**

7) **Does your organization have a specific office/unit for equality, inclusion and diversity issues?**
    a. Yes, there is one office/unit covering all elements
    b. Yes, there are several units/offices covering these issues
    c. No

    **If yes, please indicate the following:**
    - Name of the office/unit
    - Description (operation, specific competencies, structural position within university / level of self-administration, legal basis, etc)
    - Services offered
    - Website, if any
    - Current Information and support available in English

    **NOTE**: if there is more than one office/unit, please specify the data for all of them

8) **In terms of gender equality, does your organization meet the following criteria?**

    **Gender balance in leadership and decision-making**
    a. Yes
    b. No

    Please provide useful information on the subjecy

**Gender equality in recruitment and career progression**

a. Yes
b. No

Please provide useful information on the subject

**Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content**

a. Yes
b. No

Please provide useful information on the subject

**Work-life balance**

a. Yes
b. No

Please provide useful information on the subject

9) **Do you have strategies for universal accessibility?**

a. Yes
b. No

If the answer is yes, please provide further details (when possible, please also add contact persons)

**Does it also contemplate aspects for digital accessibility?**

a. Yes
b. No

If the answer is yes, please provide further details

10) **Does your university have strategies to promote and develop democratic values and engagement?**

a. Yes
b. No

If the answer is yes, please provide further details

11) **Does your university have any specific program to promote the integration of international refugee/immigrant students?**

a. Yes.
b. No

If the answer is yes, please provide further details

12) **Additional information/comments (if you feel like you need more space, please use this part for further information)**

# Annexe II: Success Stories and Good Practices

## →from Hanze University of Applied Sciences

*Success Stories*

Leadership Gender Representation

As of December 2022, 58.5% of Hanze UAS staff are women, and the Executive Board includes two women and one man, while the Supervisory Board has three women and four men.

- This reflects real progress in gender representation at the highest levels of governance.

Commitment to Global and Regional Frameworks

Hanze UAS has endorsed key frameworks like SDG 5 (Gender Equality), the Diversity Charter, and Amnesty International's "Let's Talk About YES" manifesto.

- This shows a holistic commitment — not just policy, but also culture and accountability.

Institutional Embedding

Gender equality is integrated into annual planning across all Schools and staff offices, with specific goals tailored to their contexts.

- Embedding gender goals in core planning ensures structural change rather than one-off actions.

*Good Practices*

Diversity & Inclusion Knowledge Platform

Established an internal platform of experts, ambassadors, and support staff to increase awareness and drive gender equality initiatives.

✔ Decentralized yet coordinated approach empowers every part of the university.

Dedicated Gender Equality Officer

A dedicated officer in the HR department advises all organizational units on gender equality.

✔ Dedicated roles create accountability and provide expertise where needed.

Targeted Interventions in Schools with Imbalances

Schools such as Engineering, Nursing, and Education involve both students and staff to tackle gender imbalances directly.

✔ Context-specific engagement ensures relevance and effectiveness.

Practical Support Measures

Actions include buddy programs, inclusive recruitment, workshops on unconscious bias, parental leave communication, domestic violence officers, and social safety initiatives.

✔ Comprehensive and human-centered practices that go beyond compliance.

Annual Monitoring and Public Accountability

Gender equality data is monitored annually and published in public reports and on the website.

✔ Transparency builds trust and encourages continuous improvement.

Active Ambassadorship

Schools and students are encouraged to initiate and promote gender equality activities, like the School of Social Studies' International Women's Day celebration.

✔ Community involvement fosters a grassroots culture of inclusion.

## →from University of La Laguna

The University of La Laguna (ULL) is a pioneer in gender equality in higher education, with its comprehensive Gender Equality Plan 2022–2026. This plan reflects the university's dedication to promoting inclusive academic, professional, and cultural environments, aligned with both Spanish legislation and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5: Gender Equality).

*Success Stories*

- ULL achieved AENOR certification for its Gender Equality Management and Equal Pay systems.

- The Gender Equality Unit (UIG) became a model structure for coordination, education, and policy advancement.

- Strong presence in national networks and forums on equality and gender-based violence prevention.

- Demonstrated institutional change through concrete improvements in governance, recruitment, and cultural inclusivity.

*Good Practices*

1. Equality Policies and Institutional Commitment

- Development of a robust Gender Equality Management System.

- Certified by AENOR for both gender equality and gender pay equity.

- Creation of the Gender Equality Unit (UIG) and equality commissions in all faculties.

- Systematic audits and strategic partnerships with public and private institutions.

2. Staff and Career Progression

- Review and adjustment of recruitment policies to eliminate gender bias.

- Prioritization of underrepresented genders in selection tie-breaks.

- Integration of gender equality merit in faculty evaluation and promotion.

3. Work Environment and Life Balance

- Comprehensive diagnostics of working conditions with gender perspective.

- Implementation of flexible work arrangements and planning for on-campus childcare.

- Promotion of a “Concilia Commission” to develop work-life balance strategies.

4. Training and Communication

- Mandatory training in gender sensitivity, inclusive language, and leadership.

- Use of inclusive communication across all platforms and documents.

- Development of guides and online resources to normalize non-sexist language.

5. Student Engagement and Visibility

- Open Day initiatives to combat gender stereotypes in academic choices.

- Student-focused campaigns promoting equality, new masculinities, and co-responsibility.

- Visibility efforts such as digital feminist calendars and thematic workshops.

6. Prevention of Harassment and Gender Violence

- Clear protocols for reporting and handling sexual or sexist harassment.

- Annual diagnostics and training to assess risk and raise awareness.

- Collaboration with other universities for protective mobility options.

## →from Bragança Polytechnic University

This document outlines the key success stories and best practices from the Gender Equality initiatives of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (IPB), based on its Gender Equality Plan, Code of Conduct, and Regulation of the Commission for Gender Equality, Inclusion, and Diversity. These efforts align with national and European guidelines and demonstrate IPB’s strong institutional commitment to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion across all academic and operational domains.

## *Success Stories*

•Gender balance in student population: In 2021/2022, 52.83% of enrolled students were women, with a majority also seen in undergraduate and master's degrees.

•Increased female representation among graduates: From 2017 to 2021, 57.67% of IPB graduates were women, with a clear upward trend in multiple study cycles.

•Teaching staff gender equity: As of recent data, 51.94% of IPB's teaching staff are female, showing a positive trajectory in recent years.

•Establishment of the Commission for Gender Equality, Inclusion, and Diversity (CIGID) as a dedicated body to drive equality actions and policy implementation.

•Creation and publication of a comprehensive Code of Conduct against workplace harassment, ensuring institutional commitment to safe work environments.

•Operationalization of flexible work arrangements and active support for parental leave to promote work-life balance.

## *Good Practices*

•Adoption of a multidimensional Gender Equality Plan aligned with the UN SDGs and Horizon Europe framework.

•Regular awareness and mentoring sessions addressing gender-based violence, work-life balance, and gender equity in career progression.

•Implementation of inclusive language policies and gender mainstreaming in forms, teaching content, and communication tools.

•Development of indicators and annual monitoring for gender-sensitive recruitment and career advancement procedures.

•Promotion of inclusive and diverse leadership through gender-balanced decision-making committees and leadership workshops.

•Public dissemination of resources and tools for identifying and reporting harassment and violence, including digital platforms for anonymous complaints.

•Integration of a gender perspective into teaching, research, and outreach through thematic events, campaigns, and curriculum review.

•Support systems for students and staff combining family obligations with professional roles through services like childcare protocols and flexible scheduling.

•Establishment of a diverse and representative Commission structure, including students, teaching and non-teaching staff from all academic units.

## →from Hochschule Bremen – City University of Applied Sciences

This document highlights key success stories and best practices derived from the Gender Equality Plan (2023–2027) of Bremen University of Applied Sciences (HSB). These initiatives span across education, research, student support, career development, and institutional culture, reflecting HSB's commitment to a gender-equitable, inclusive academic environment.

*Success Stories*

•The proportion of female students in STEM fields rose steadily, with increases of 3.3 percentage points since 2016.

•MeetMINT and makeMINT mentoring programs were instrumental in attracting and retaining female students in STEM.

•HSB adopted an anti-discrimination statute and created comprehensive guidelines for addressing harassment.

•Established an Equal Opportunities Office that drives initiatives and collaborates with university-wide stakeholders.

•Implemented inclusive student-parent support systems such as the Family Card, childcare services, and solidarity funds.

•The Rosy Future program supports female students' transition to the workforce, including career guidance and mentorship.

•Strategic gender integration into curriculum and research has fostered awareness and quality improvements in teaching.

*Good Practices*

•Gender and diversity training for all staff, especially in leadership and hiring roles.

•Integration of gender equality in research via dedicated project roles, training, and review of proposals.

•Provision of tools and guidelines for gender-sensitive personnel selection and appointment procedures.

•Establishment of a supportive structure for gender-diverse individuals, including easy name/gender entry updates.

•Dedicated facilities such as the meetMINT Lab and Young Computer Science Lab for hands-on, inclusive STEM engagement.

•Public engagement through gender equality events, interdisciplinary dialogues, and digital media campaigns.

•Interdisciplinary gender and diversity workshops for both students and lecturers via the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

•Flexible study and work arrangements to accommodate caregiving responsibilities (family-friendly university model).

## →from Silesian University in Opava

The Silesian University in Opava demonstrates a robust commitment to equality, ethical governance, and institutional integrity through comprehensive policies, strategic initiatives, and progressive reforms. These practices are underpinned by its Equal Opportunities Policy, GAP Analysis, and adherence to the HR Award framework.

Equal Opportunities Policy

The University has adopted an Equal Opportunities Policy to prevent discrimination based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and other social determinants. Key highlights include:

- Promotion of gender-balanced teams.

- Transparent recruitment and fair remuneration.

- Creation of a prestigious and inclusive work environment.

- Integration with the HRA Action Plan and Gender Equality Plan (GEP).

Implementation and Institutional Support

Implementation is carried out through structured internal documentation and practices, such as:

- Code of Ethics and updated Selection Procedure Code including non-discrimination clauses.

- Creation of an ombudsman role for impartial support to employees and students.

- Anonymous reporting channels and systematic staff training.

- Compliance with Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) principles.

GAP Analysis Insights and Improvements

The GAP analysis (2020–2023) revealed key development areas in non-discrimination, staff selection, and gender equality. Successful reforms include:

- Amending internal codes to reflect non-discrimination principles.

- Establishing clearer recruitment procedures and diverse selection panels.

- Promoting internal awareness and communication about equal opportunities.

*Success Stories*

- SU received the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2021, validating its structured and ethical HR policies.

- Development and implementation of Equal Opportunities Policy have improved employee satisfaction and institutional reputation.

- Inclusion of an ombudsman and anonymous reporting system has enhanced trust and accountability across the university community.

*Good Practices*

- Fair and transparent recruitment based on merit and OTM-R guidelines.

- Regular feedback and performance evaluations based on qualitative metrics.

- Equal pay for equal work and structured promotion opportunities.

- Training on ethics, leadership, and scientific integrity.

- Flexible work arrangements and reintegration support after long-term leave.

## →from University West

University West integrates gender equality into its sustainability strategy and core academic mission. The institution's gender mainstreaming plan (2023–2025) builds upon years of systematic work, research, and development to embed equality into education, research, leadership, and organizational culture.

*Success Stories*

- Recognition as a national leader in integrating gender equality into sustainability.

- Development of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and Production Technology into full academic environments with gender equality principles.

- Active collaboration with local government and external partners in inclusive campus design and societal hubs.

- Data-driven improvements in recruitment equity, curriculum inclusivity, and staff development.

*Good Practices*

1. Systematic Gender Mainstreaming and Sustainability Integration

- Gender equality integrated into the university's management system and quality assurance process.

- Creation of a Sustainability Board and local collaborators in every department.

- Adoption of an intersectional approach acknowledging diverse identities and systemic bias.

2. Safe Work and Study Environment

- Strong focus on eliminating gender-based victimization, bullying, and harassment.

- Training for staff and students on respectful behavior and informal power structures.

- Whistleblowing channels and improved victim support systems.

3. Equal Distribution of Power, Resources, and Opportunities

- Target of 40–60% gender representation across all departments and leadership.

- Review and revision of hiring, promotion, and research funding systems.

- Introduction of transparent processes and action plans to increase female professorships.

4. Gender Equality in Education and Research

- Inclusion of gender equality in all programmes and higher education pedagogy.

- Regular gender-sensitive curriculum reviews and inclusive teaching training.

- Student engagement in design and feedback processes.

5. Strengthening Gender Equality Support Systems

- Investment in human resources, time, and funding to sustain equality efforts.

- Creation of centres for academic and pedagogical support in gender studies.

- Systematic reviews of salary mapping, internal communication, and institutional bias.

## →from Cracow University of Technology

Cracow University's anti-mobbing policy establishes a structured response to workplace harassment, including clear reporting protocols, mediation options, and disciplinary actions. The policy is supplemented by preventive measures such as regular training for staff and students on recognizing and addressing harassment. An annual "Workplace Respect" survey provides actionable insights for enhancing the campus culture.

*Success Stories*

While the documents do not explicitly list success stories, the establishment of detailed policies and structured support systems reflect PK University's proactive and progressive stance on ethics, accessibility, and community well-being. These frameworks demonstrate the university's commitment to fostering an inclusive, fair, and supportive academic environment.

*Good Practices*

1. Code of Ethics at Cracow University of Technology

The Tadeusz Kościuszko Cracow University of Technology upholds ethical values such as truth, dignity, freedom, responsibility, justice, tolerance, and laboriousness. These values are promoted at both the institutional and individual levels among faculty, staff, and students. University authorities lead by example and commit to transparency, fair treatment, and the prevention of corruption, mobbing, and nepotism.

2. Accessibility Policy

PK University implements an inclusive Accessibility Policy focused on architectural, digital, and information-communication accessibility for all, especially individuals with special needs. The university establishes coordinators and ambassadors to oversee the policy, conducts regular reviews, and adapts facilities and communication practices accordingly.

3. Anti-Mobbing Policy

The Internal Anti-Mobbing Policy defines and combats workplace bullying through a structured reporting and mediation system. A dedicated committee assesses complaints and recommends action, which may include disciplinary measures. The policy includes annual training and detailed guidance to recognize and prevent mobbing behavior, ensuring a respectful work environment.

4. Anti-Discrimination Policy

PK University's Anti-Discrimination Policy outlines mechanisms to prevent and address discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. It ensures support systems like mediation, psychological consultation, and disciplinary procedures. The policy emphasizes equality, dignity, and legal recourse for affected individuals.

## →from University Marie et Louis Pasteur

The University Marie et Louis Pasteur (UMLP) is strongly committed to promoting professional equality between women and men, as demonstrated through its comprehensive Gender Equality Action Plans (2021–2023, 2024–2026). This commitment is driven by both legal obligations and a desire to implement structural, cultural, and policy reforms in higher education.

*Success Stories*

- Introduction and success of Cellule SOS, receiving 67 reports in 2022, leading to institutional action.

- Increased female representation in teaching roles since 2000, with targeted actions for professorship parity.

- Adoption of regional and inter-university collaborations on equality and secularism.

- Consistent and public evaluation of progress through accessible annual equality indices and social reports.

*Good Practices*

1. Tackling Gender Pay Gaps

- Development of a pay gap analysis tool using national statistical standards.

- Ongoing updates and transparency through social reports.

- Awareness campaigns and adjustment measures around pay and bonus criteria.

2. Ensuring Equal Access and Career Development

- Data-driven analysis of recruitment and promotion by gender.

- Elimination of gendered terminology in job postings.

- Creation of a best practices recruitment guide and mentoring initiatives.

- Participation in professional women's networks and promotion of inclusive communication.

3. Promoting Work-Life Balance

- Adoption of a work-time charter and right to disconnect.

- Remote work and flexible hours tailored to caregiving needs.

- Partnership development for parental support services (e.g., daycare).

4. Addressing Discrimination and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

- Launch of 'Cellule SOS', a dedicated reporting and support platform.

- Psychological and legal support services and regular awareness campaigns.

- Dedicated space for victims and formalized training for response teams.

5. Supporting Women's Health and Parenthood

- Provision of menstrual health support through emergency dispensers.

- Orientation interviews for maternity/paternity leave and reintegration support.

- Policies and training to address parenthood's impact on careers.

6. Driving the Gender Equality Policy

- Formation of a gender equality steering committee.

- Integration of equality in internal governance and communication.

- Pursuit of national "Equality/Diversity" certification.

- Creation of inclusive communication guides and promotion of university-led research on gender topics.

## →from Aleksandër Moisiu University Durrës (UAMD)

Aleksandër Moisiu University, Durrës (UAMD) is committed to advancing gender equality and promoting diversity through institutional reforms and strategic actions. Recognized by the HR Excellence Award, UAMD has taken important steps to embed equality across teaching, research, leadership, and organizational culture.

*Success Stories*

- UAMD has successfully embedded gender equality as a core part of its strategic development aligned with the Council of Europe and United Nations 2030 Agenda.

- The Gender Equality Plan 2022–2025 actively supports gender mainstreaming across all levels of the university.

- Increased gender awareness and commitment to inclusive leadership among university staff and students.

- Establishment of measurable indicators and monitoring processes to track progress toward gender equality.

*Good Practices*

1. Mainstreaming Gender Dimension into Teaching and Research

- Incorporating gender analysis into research projects and methodologies.

- Offering workshops and capacity building for academic and administrative staff on gender equality and diversity.

- Promoting gender-responsive research and innovation aligned with local community needs.

2. Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

- Reviewing human resources policies to ensure compliance with gender equality standards.

- Monitoring gender balance in recruitment, promotions, and research teams.

- Creating a Gender Equality Unit to spearhead data collection, analysis, and strategy.

3. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

- Promoting gender balance in boards, councils, and leadership positions.

- Revising institutional regulations to better embed gender equality principles.

- Training on leadership, anti-discrimination, and inclusive decision-making.

4. Work-Life Balance and Organisational Culture

- Supporting flexible working arrangements and parental leave policies.

- Conducting awareness campaigns on equality and organizing flagship conferences.

- Introducing online modules on gender equality and anti-discrimination.

5. Measures against Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination

- Offering counselling services and safe reporting channels.

- Conducting workshops and public lectures to combat gender-based violence and harassment.

- Regularly revising university regulations to integrate anti-discrimination guidelines.

# Annexe III: GEDI Panel discussion

To support the STARS EU Alliance in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion values, a **GEDI panel of discussion was created with around 30 members** from all HEIs including persons from all the groups (academics, administrative staff and students, as well as stakeholders).

The role of the GEDI panel of discussion includes advising the Alliance's Commission and Steering Committee in all matters relating to these aspects, assessing the existing GEDI plans in each partner and supporting the adoption of an Alliance Action Plan for Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The composition of the GEDI panel is as follows:

### Hanze University of Applied Sciences

**Eelste Abels** - Role: Researcher, trainer, and advocate on gender dynamics

**Alet Denneboom** - Role: Hanze Advisor on Participation, Diversity, and Inclusion

**Bodhana Pavlo** - Role: Hanze's first-year student with an interest in gender dynamics

### Bragança Polytechnic University

**Rute Couto Fernandes** - Role: Professor / Presidente of Gender Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Committee

**Maria de Fátima Pacheco** - Role: Professor & Researcher / Coordinator of IPB's Mentoring and Tutoring Program

**Sofia Bergano** - Role: Professor & Researcher / Recognised expert by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality

**Wanderley Conceição** - Role: Alumni / Team member of inclusion4all project

**Gabriel Noira** - Role: Student / IPB's representative in STARS EU Student Board

### Hochschule Bremen - City University of Applied Sciences

**Sabina Schoefer** - Role: Vice President of Digitalisation, Change Management and Diversity (Responsibility for issues of equality and diversity at HSB)

**Barbara Rinken** - Role: Equal Opportunity Office

**Benjamin Tannert** - Role: Professor / President of Institute for Digital Participation (interdisciplinary institute with research focuses on e.g. digital participation in work

environments or digital learning in higher education; inclusive development processes for technologies)

**Jost Röttger** - Role: AStA (General Students' Council) Department for Higher Education Policy (Department for Intersectionality is currently not occupied)

**Carola Spiecker-Lampe** - Role: Professor / Scientific Director of Center for Intercultural Management & Diversity (ZIM)

### University of La Laguna

**María José Guerra** - Role: Prof. of Moral Philosophy / Former counsellor (2020-21) of Youth and Education, Canary Islands Government

**Maria Jesus Llarena** - Role: Lecturer of English Philology

**Acaimo González** - Role: STARS EU dissemination coordinator

### Silesian University in Opava

**Katerina Janku** - Role: Vice-Dean for International Relations

### University West

**Jan Theliander** - Role: Pro Vice Chancellor / Associate Professor

**Beatrice Löfström** - Role: Investigator, The Equality Authority in Sweden

### Cracow University of Technology

**Marek Bauer** - Role: Vice-rector for Students' Affairs

**Justyna Małkuch-Świtalska** - Role: Academic Ombuds and Mediator

**Beata Romek** – Role: Ombuds for Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

**Alicja Półtorak-Filipowska** - Role: member of the WP 7.2 working team

**Magdalena Cora** - Role: member of the WP 7.2 working team

### Marie and Louis Pasteur University

**Guillaume Jehannin** - Role: Senior Lecturer specialist in equality and secularism

**Floriane Mouget** - Role: Psychologist

**Bassir Amiri** - Role: Associate Professor in ancient history / Vice-President in charge of equality, secularism and the prevention of discrimination

**Marie-Cecile Pera** - Role: Professor in Electrical Engineering / Leader for UMLP of task 7.2

### Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës

**Ekaterina Strati** - Role: Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages - Faculty of Education / Leader for UAMD WP7 and member of Task 7.2 working team