



Slovak Academy of Sciences

Gender Equality Plan

2025 – 2029

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SAS Committee for Equality
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Approved

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SAS Organization

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European charter and code for researchers

HRS4R – action plan SAS

Horizon Europe – Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)

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Gender Equality Strategy 2020 – 2025

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Introduction

The SAS Gender Equality Plan for the years 2025–2029 (hereinafter “Gender Equality Plan” and “GEP”) builds on the historically first Gender Equality Plan for the years 2021–2024 and on the activities carried out throughout its implementation. The first GEP significantly contributed to awareness-raising about gender equality in science and research within SAS. As part of the GEP preparation, a gender audit was conducted identifying the following problems concerning gender equality in the institution:

- **vertical gender segregation** – whereas women dominated in non-scientific positions, (up to 71%), in the case of professional staff (research and development employees), this predominance dropped to 57% and 44% in the case of scientific staff. The leaky pipeline phenomenon has also emerged in the SAS. Women slightly dominated up to the qualification level IIb reaching equal gender proportion at the level of IIa. However, men were significantly more represented (76%) among those with I qualifications.
- **unequal gender balance in leadership positions** – the proportion of women in the Presidium of SAS and the Scientific Council of SAS was only one-fifth while among organizations’ directors, it was 40%.
- **horizontal segregation** – is the most evident in technical and natural sciences (predominance of men) and medical sciences (predominance of women). Men are slightly dominated in the humanities and social sciences while marginally more women are represented in the agricultural sciences.

The implementation of the SAS Gender Equality Plan in the years 2021–2024 led to some important systemic changes at the SAS level; for example, inclusion of a chapter on gender equality with certain indicators into the structure of the annual reports of SAS organizations, the adoption of guidelines for reporting and management of sexual harassment cases, recognition of maternal/parental leave or long-term sick leave in grant duration within the SAS grant schemes as well as the creation of a new return grant scheme for parents returning from maternal/parental leave.

The SAS Gender Equality Plan for the years 2025–2029 builds upon these positive changes and reflects experiences and challenges identified during the implementation of the first GEP. One important lesson learned from the previous GEP implementation is that the institutional structure of SAS provides only limited competencies to the Presidium of SAS (and the Office of SAS) to implement measures from various areas of gender equality, as areas such as work-life balance, gender equality in recruitment and career progression, or integration of gender dimension into research and teaching content belong to direct responsibilities of SAS organizations as individual legal entities. Another important factor influencing the



implementation of the previous Gender Equality Plan was an insufficient allocation of personal and financial resources that was compensated by the ATHENA/Horizon 2020 project. Thus, the Gender Equality Plan for the years 2025–2029 reflects the need to establish the institutional and financial support of the gender equality agenda within SAS. As a result, Objective 1 on institutional coordination has been added to the original objectives of the previous GEP.

The Gender Equality Plan should be implemented in synergy with the European Charter for Researchers, with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and be in line with the Action Plan HRS4R (Human Resources Strategy for Researchers) for SAS. By its nature, the Gender Equality Plan is a dynamic document; its fulfillment should be regularly monitored and the document subsequently revised maintaining and supporting a participatory approach.

Action plan

The Gender Equality Plan for the years 2025–2029 covers the following 6 areas/objectives:

- 1. Institutional coordination of the Gender Equality Plan**
- 2. Work-life balance and organizational culture**
- 3. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making**
- 4. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression**
- 5. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content**
- 6. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment**

Objective 1: Institutional coordination of the Gender Equality Plan

The successful implementation of the Gender Equality Plan requires the establishment of an institutional coordination and monitoring system that reflects the competencies and responsibilities of individual SAS organizations and the Presidium. Additionally, institutional and financial support is one of the European Commission's obligatory requirements for implementing gender equality in science and research.

The implementation, monitoring, and coordination of the GEP consists of several levels:

1. **Executive coordinator** – minimum of a half-time contract with clear assignation of the gender equality agenda into the work tasks. The executive coordinator is responsible for the implementation monitoring summarized in an annual GEP implementation report, recording the activities carried out in the scope of the GEP, and evaluating the status of gender equality at SAS based on predefined indicators.
2. **A member of the Presidium of SAS in charge of gender equality agenda** – the role is to create gender equality policies at the SAS level in cooperation with the SAS Committee for Equality, create and submit materials related to gender equality to the Presidium of SAS (new measures, monitoring reports on GEP implementation, reports on the status of gender equality in SAS based on indicators), and support the implementation of the GEP. In addition, he or she facilitates the implementation of the GEP in the individual scientific sections based on their specificities. He or she supports the executive coordinator in cooperating with SAS organizations in the GEP implementation, organizing and participating in workshops or events, and collecting data.
3. **SAS Committee for Equality** – an advisory body of the Presidium of SAS responsible for creating concepts and measures related to gender equality based on the continuous monitoring of the GEP and external up-to-date knowledge and trends in the gender equality area.
4. **Coordinators in the SAS organizations** – they are responsible for the implementation of activities within the SAS organizations, data collection, and information necessary for the monitoring and evaluation of GEP, indicators of gender equality, and the data listed in the annual report of the organization.

At the Astronomical Institute of SAS, the scientific secretary has been serving as the gender equality coordinator since January 1, 2025.



Institutional coordination of the GEP

Aims	Activities and measures	Due date	Responsibility	Indicators	Budget
Support of the implementation and regular monitoring of activities	Stabile position of the executive coordinator at the Office of SAS	06/2025	Presidium of SAS	Established position with adequate time and financial allocation	SAS
	Designation of the gender equality agenda to a member of the Presidium of SAS	09/2025	Presidium of SAS	material “Scope, competencies, authority, and tasks of members of the Presidium of SAS”	
	Appointment of a gender equality coordinator at the level of SAS organizations	10/2025	SAS organizations	a list of coordinators	
Development and annual publication of indicators for evaluating gender equality at SAS	Development of gender equality indicators including the method of their measurement using gender disaggregated data	10/2025	Institute for Research in Social Communication SAS, ATHENA, and other SAS experts	a list of indicators	ATHENA
	Annual publication of the status of gender equality at SAS based on the indicators	annual	executive coordinator for gender equality	publication of the report on gender equality status	SAS
Support of the implementation of the activities of the Gender Equality Plan at SAS	Allocation of funds for the implementation of the GEP from the central budget of SAS	annual	Presidium of SAS	budget item	SAS
	Provision of regular educational activities about gender equality at various levels (leadership, PhD. students, scientific workers, etc.)	annual	Presidium of SAS, executive coordinator for gender equality	Number and types of trainings, number of participants	SAS



Objective 2: Work-life balance and organizational culture

Several measures contributing to the work-life balance were adopted at the SAS level in the previous period, including the implementation of the SAS Return project scheme for parents after maternal/parental leave or the adjusting of the conditions of the SAS grant schemes to consider the period of maternal/parental leave or the period of long-term sick-leave. Moreover, a consultation system on the rights and responsibilities related to maternal or parental leave for the SAS organizations was created at the Office of SAS. These measures will continue to be implemented in the next period, however, it is important to monitor and evaluate their application concerning gender representation.

In the previous GEP, the focus of the work-life balance and organizational culture objective was primarily on parents of small children; however, some intersectionality aspects and the needs of other groups have started to be reflected (e.g., the health status). The following GEP will continue in this trend with the ambition to further emphasize the dimension of intersectional disadvantages.

One of the most important measures contributing to the work-life balance is the provision of childcare for SAS employees. This measure is heavily used in academic institutions in Europe and Slovakia. Preschools/kindergartens or nurseries are either established directly by the academic institutions or these institutions provide space for a public or private service provider within their academic campuses.



Work-life balance and organizational culture

Aims	Activities and measures	Due date	Responsibility	Indicators	Budget/ Funding
Support to employees in the context of motherhood/parenthood (at the beginning, during, and after maternal/parental leave), or long-term sick leave	Promotion and evaluation of the existing instruments (Return grant scheme, SAS grants, etc.)	annual	executive coordinator	publication in the GEP monitoring report	SAS
	Adaptation of the evaluation criteria for employees in SAS organizations acknowledging maternal or parental leave or long-term sick leave	2026	SAS organizations	Adapted evaluation criteria for employees	
	Communication with state bodies to minimize potential discriminatory character of science evaluation	continuous	Presidium of SAS	correspondence	
Sensitization toward the issue of work-life balance	Promotion of work-life balance within SAS communication channels and examples of good practice	annual	SAS Department of Communication and Media, SAS Committee for Media, Communication, and the Open Academy Program	minimum of two media releases per year	SAS



Supporting a friendly work environment considering potential health disadvantages, caring for relatives, and foreign employees, and preventing consequences of the interaction of multiple disadvantages	Publication of recommendations for a friendly work environment considering multiple disadvantages	2028	HRS4R	workshop about multicultural work environment, publication of recommendations and examples of good practice	SAS
Preschool/kindergarten for the SAS employees	Establishing preschool/kindergarten or nursery on the SAS campus	2028	Presidium of SAS	project documentation	SAS



Objective 3: Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Within the previous GEP, a gender audit was conducted as part of the H2020/ATHENA project. The audit comprised quantitative and qualitative surveys reflecting also the topic of gender balance in leadership and decision-making. Caring for relatives and family members was identified as the most prominent barrier to women's participation in leadership and decision-making. In addition to caregiving, social contacts and informal networks to which men have better access play an important role in access to decision-making. The survey also indicated women's "self-impediment" tendency, as men were perceived as more assertive and competitive. Measures in this objective therefore aim at supporting women's ambition and willingness to apply for leadership and decision-making positions at the level of SAS and its organizations by applying "soft" tools.

Gender equality in the areas of leadership and decision-making

Aims	Activities and measures	Due date	Responsibility	Indicators	Budget
Identification and support of future leaders considering equal gender representation	Identification of potential leaders, preparation for candidacy, introduction of mentoring at the level of SAS bodies	continuous	Presidium of SAS	Increase in the representation of women in SAS bodies to one-third	
	Identification of potential leaders, preparation for candidacy, introduction of mentoring at the level of SAS organizations	continuous	SAS organizations / Presidium of SAS	achieving gender representation proportional to the gender composition of organizations in decision-making bodies (leadership, scientific council, management board, supervisory board)	
Support for participatory forms of decision-making	Promotion of participatory forms of decision-making through education and information dissemination	continuous	Presidium of SAS, SAS organizations	number of individuals participating in the training, number of information disseminated	SAS, SAS organizations



Objective 4: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

SAS focuses considerably on the career development of young scientists; career development is supported through several grant programs. “Doktograd” aim to support scientific projects of full-time doctoral students within SAS organizations. Furthermore, several instruments support postdoc researchers: Štefan Schwarz Support Fund, PostdokGrant, and compensation allowance to retain young scientists. Nevertheless, these instruments have not been evaluated based on gender. Regular trainings are organized about the individual grant schemes for young scientists, and the presentation of career paths of excellent researchers is a part of all-academic doctoral seminars. SAS has a functioning system of training and workshops of “soft” instruments supporting young scientists in scientific publishing, grant submission and administration, multidisciplinary cooperation, and training in the ethics of science. In addition to the existing supportive instruments, a mentoring system regarding individual career progression should be implemented.

Equal pay constitutes an important aspect of gender equality. Based on the transposition of a Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on strengthening the principle of equal pay for equal work between men and women in the labor market, employers with more than 150 employees will be mandated to publish the average salary of women and men at the same positions starting in 2027 and employers with 100 employees or more in 2031. Concerning this obligation, the administrative systems will have to be adjusted so that SAS organizations can fulfill this requirement.



Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Aims	Activities and measures	Due date	Responsibility	Indicators	Budget
Support for gender equality in career progression	Gender-based evaluation of grant instruments supporting career growth (dokto grant, postdok grant, Š. Schwarz Support Fund, etc.)	continuous	executive coordinator	publication in the GEP monitoring report	SAS
	Creation of individual mentoring network and pilot testing	2026	Presidium of SAS	numbers of mentors and mentees	SAS
	Implementation of institutional career mentoring in SAS organizations based on the supply principle (strategies for scientific publishing, strategies for career growth, grant strategies, grant administration)	2027–2029	Presidium of SAS/SAS organizations	number of events	Presidium of SAS/SAS organizations
Gender pay gap identification	Creation of the computation and data collection methodology	2026	Presidium of SAS	statistical indicator of the gender pay gap	SAS



Objective 5: Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

Within this objective, a chapter on gender equality was introduced into the structure of annual reports comprising a subchapter on gender dimension in research. Based on the present monitoring, this perspective is particularly relevant for Section 3, but to a certain extent, it is also considered by SAS organizations from other sections. Although several researchers conduct gender-oriented research at SAS, there is no platform to network and present their research.

Integration of the gender perspective into research and teaching content

Aims	Activities and measures	Due date	Responsibility	Indicators	Budget
Promotion of the gender dimension in research within SAS	Networking conference on gender-oriented research to stimulate interdisciplinary scientific cooperation, initiating grant cooperation, and presenting gender-oriented research.	biennial interval	Presidium of SAS, SAS organizations	concept, number of participants	SAS
	Promotion of gender-oriented research within the communication channels of SAS (website, podcasts)	continuous	SAS Committee for Media, Communication, and the Open Academy Program, Committee for Equality, SAS Department of Communication and Media	number of media releases	SAS
	Monitoring of gender-oriented research at SAS	annual	executive coordinator	publication in the GEP monitoring report	
PhD education on the gender dimension in research for the SAS sections	regular seminar	annual	Presidium of SAS	number of participants	SAS



Objective 6: Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

In June 2023, Guidelines for reporting and management of sexual harassment cases at SAS were adopted, describing informal and formal options for addressing these cases. At the same time, three confident persons have been appointed and trained, and offer consultations. However, regular information about the issue of sexual harassment and the existing form of support needs to be disseminated among SAS employees. The application of the adopted processes should be regularly evaluated (number of contacts, cases addressed within the different processes, and with what results) to identify potential shortcomings and to revise the guidelines.

Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Aims	Activities and measures	Due date	Responsibility	Indicators	Budget
The implementation and evaluation of the directive addressing gender-based violence and sexual harassment	Regular information dissemination about the issue of gender-based harassment and processes for addressing such cases within the SAS communication channels	minimum once a year	SAS Department of Communication and Media	number of releases	
	Continuous education and supervision for confident persons	once a year/continuous	Presidium of SAS	number of events and meetings, appointed supervisor	SAS
	Monitoring of the implementation of the processes for addressing cases of sexual harassment	minimum of once a year	executive coordinator	publication in the GEP monitoring report	