

POLICY BRIEF: GENDER RESEARCH IRELAND

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INFORMING EU POLICY

This policy brief is based on a *Key Policy Messages* document submitted to the EC Research Executive Agency (REA), in conjunction with a research presentation in the REA, Brussels, 25th June 2019. The presentation was part of the *Education and Learning* panel. The purpose of *Key Policy Messages* was to both drive EC policy directions, informed by European Union funded research.



WHAT IS GENDER RESEARCH IRELAND?

[GendeResearchIreland](#) (2018-2022) is a project funded by the European Commission's (EC) Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Individual Fellowship programme. It has been designed and is being delivered by Dr Monica O'Mullane, hosted by the Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century (ISS21), University College Cork. The project's research study is an exploratory inquiry into the role of the [Athena SWAN Charter](#) in embedding gender equality in higher education in Ireland.

Dr Caitríona Ní Laoire is Monica's project mentor. They worked together previously on the FP7 funded GENOVATE consortium project (2013-2017) and in ISS21 Research Cluster activities (2008-2010). The project's Advisory Group in UCC includes Professor Carol Linehan, Professor Fred Powell and Dr Allen White.

*“Lessons can be learnt from
GendeResearchIreland as the EU addresses
gender inequalities on a pan-European basis”*

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

- In supporting and sustaining careers in research, academia and innovation, policies need to be formulated in a bottom-up and top-down holistic approach, in providing increased support for women's careers, a greater appreciation for caring responsibilities, efforts to challenge discrimination and bias, and challenging and channelling the intersectionalities.
- In implementing gender equality interventions, the formal process of intervention is influenced by the informal processes within institutions, which impacts on how actions are conceived and implemented. This is important to acknowledge in formulating policies.
- The EU may follow the trend of tying research funding eligibility to institutions working on and addressing gender inequalities, in the way Ireland has done.
- The Athena SWAN Charter is the most comprehensive gender equality intervention in the EU, and lays a concrete basis for a pan-EU gender equality accreditation scheme.



“Presenting to REA staff including my Project Officer, to the REA-appointed evaluators, and to fellow MSCA grantees, who were working broadly on *Education and Learning* themed projects, was a thrilling and stimulating experience! It reaffirmed my passion for European unity and collaboration. Cannot wait to go back!”- Monica

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE- PRESENTING TO THE REA IN BRUSSELS, JUNE 2019

Having never visited Brussels, Belgium, before in my life, I was so thrilled to finally go to the renowned home of the EU! I had learned about the history and structures of the EU in my time as an earnest student on the UCC Government and Politics degree programme many years ago (2000-2004). Brussels, which represents the heart of the EU to myself and many others, also reminds me of what the EU has brought into my own life. Free mobility and movement of people meant that my now husband (from Slovakia) was able to choose to move to Ireland in 2006, once the borders opened up after the 2004 round of EU member states accession. I was also able to easily move and live there from 2010 to 2018. Our daughter was born there in 2014. My Dad has worked on EC funded projects for most of my own life. I often heard about his project meetings held in Brussels (plus I often got to enjoy Belgium souvenirs and chocolate!). The trip was therefore a very personal journey. It also represented an accumulation of my sparked interest as a young, idealistic politics student, as well as a matured research fellow excited to meet representatives of the body funding my beloved fellowship, inspired by a formidable woman in science, Professor Marie Curie.

MESSAGE FOR POLICY ACTORS!

Being able to present my research study and share *Key Policy Messages* with the REA was a positive experience. I strongly suggest that those people in positions of policy development (at European, national and local levels) seek to engage with relevant researchers as key partners in the process of formulating policy visions and aims. Not only does it make intuitive sense to inform policy with the latest scientific evidence, it can also be a holistic process beneficial in the sphere of societal improvement for all.

Contact Us!

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<https://www.ucc.ie/en/iss21/>

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