



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

10 May 2022

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Equal treatment and non-discrimination are fundamental human rights and the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) seeks to cultivate them and put them into practice at the highest possible level for the benefit of all employees in a legal relationship with the organisation.

The aim of CESCI's Gender Equality Plan is to promote gender equality in the organisation in line with international, European and Hungarian regulations and recommendations. The association is committed to developing new internal processes and innovative actions and measures in order to support the sustainable structural change in the organisation to improve gender balance and gender equality in many areas, thus increasing social justice and employee satisfaction.

CESCI follows the recommendations of the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool drawn up by the European Institute of Gender Equality and the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans. Our goal is to involve and encourage the active participation of all professional and administrative staff in the successful implementation of the actions and measures set out in the first gender equality plan.

1 Legislative framework

In implementing the gender equality plan, the organisation will in particular act in accordance with the following legislation and recommendations:

- UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- CEDAW treaty
- European Convention on Human Rights
- European Social Charter
- Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)
- EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- Directive 2006/54/EC
- Article XV of the Fundamental Law of Hungary
- Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and Promotion of Equal Opportunities
- Act I of 2012 on the Labour Code

2 Principles followed in the development of the gender equality plan

The gender equality plan and future annual reports are **public** and can be accessed not only by the organisation's staff, but also by anyone on the <https://budapest.cesci-net.eu/> website. In addition, the gender equality officer responsible for the implementation of the Plan will conduct his/her activities publicly. For the annual work organisation meetings on this subject, coordinated by the officer, a reminder will be available on the internal sharing platform of the organisation.

In the development of gender equality, **transparency** is an important principle: all measures and benefits that are available to employees in the organisation should be easy to learn about and access for everybody, including new entrants.

The Plan was prepared with the involvement of the employees of CESCI, respecting the **principles of participation**. We will continue to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to provide opinion on the relevant Plan and to make suggestions on the improvement of the document. All employees participate in the implementation of the Plan.

The Plan aims to promote gender equality in the following main areas:

1. gender equality in management, decision-making, the work organisation and the scientific activities of the organisation;
2. gender equality in recruitment and career development;
3. work-life balance and organisational culture;
4. awareness-raising on prejudice and sexism;
5. measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

3 Situation assessment

The Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) was established in 2009 with the aim of promoting and strengthening cross-border cooperation, following the model of the French Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), along the state borders of Hungary and in Central and South-East Europe.

CESCI operates as an association of public utility under private-law in the field of cross-border cooperation. Our association has 51 members, local or county governments of Hungary along the border, EGTCs, and individuals. The executive body of the association is the presidential board, which can consist of 9 members at most (the number of members of the board varies).

In 2021, the work organisation of the Association was composed of 14 employees. The work organisation was led by the Secretary General and the Director. Due to its size, the association's work organisation does not have a multi-level structure, the Secretary General was responsible for strategic management in cooperation with the Director, and the operational management was carried out by the Director. Other employees in the work organisation can be divided into senior and junior categories according to their professional experience. Throughout the year, the work of the organisation was assisted by 5 volunteers and 3 scholarship holders.

1. Table: Distribution of employees by professional experience in 2021

	Number of employees	Number of women	Share of women	Number of men	Share of men
The work organisation as a whole (with employment contract of indeterminate duration)	14	6	43%	8	57%
Senior staff members	9	4	44%	5	56%
Junior staff members	5	2	40%	3	60%
Volunteers	5	5	100%	-	-
Scholarship holders	3	3	100%	-	-

Those with responsibility for the management of the work organisation are only paid more than senior employees to a token extent, and there is no gender differentiation, nor is there any gender differentiation in the case of senior employees. Junior employees receive just over half of management salaries, again without gender differentiation.

2. Table: The pay gap between female and male employees of the work organisation in 2021

The rate of salary differences between female and male employees in top management (/male/female salaries)	not relevant
The rate of salary differences between non-chief female and male senior employees (male/female salaries)	100%
The rate of salary differences between female and male junior employees (female/male salaries)	100%
The pay gap between non-chief female and male researchers (male/female salaries)	not relevant

The rate of salary differences between the top management and senior employees (top manager salaries/senior salaries)	123%
The rate of salary differences between the top management and junior employees (top manager salaries/junior salaries)	193%

As a small organisation, CESCI is able to pay relatively great attention to each of the employees. Consequently the creation of a balanced and healthy atmosphere is not just a goal, but a present characteristic of the organisation. The connections between the employees are respectful, light and correct vica versa between every level of the quasi-hierarchy.

Our organisation is run in one office, where mostly every colleague does their job with different home office options. For transparency, each employee continuously gets relevant information about every project. The short number of management and staff members ensures availability and easy access to each other and all sorts of information.

In order to achieve a work-life balance, flexible working hours, occasional teleworking and the option for part-time working have been part of the organisation's operations for years. At the start of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation temporarily completely switched to working from home, which remained part of the everyday practice even after the pandemic situation had eased. As a result of individual agreements with employees, every employee has the guaranteed possibility to work remotely on a regular basis which is included in their employment contracts.

The organisation also pays special attention to supporting women and men employees with young children. In addition to flexible working hours and regular teleworking, we offer the possibility of reduced working hours due to raising children. In 2021, the number of employees in the organisation with children under ten years of age was 2, while the number of employees with reduced working hours due to raising children was 1.

The organisation strives to provide continuous opportunities for the professional development of its employees. In 2021, we supported the PhD studies of two employees (1 female and 1 male) and the university studies of one employee (1 female) for a degree in consultancy. We also provide constant opportunities for our staff to develop their language skills (in 2021, 4 individuals in total, 3 women and 1 man). In 2021, we paid also special attention to the development of GIS (5 individuals in total, 2 women and 3 men) and IT knowledge capacities (total work organisation) of the organisation with the help of targeted training courses.

CESCI offers a package of employee benefits for every staff member, including health-related services considering also the gender aspect (e.g. gender- and age-based medical screening tests) and child care options (such as reimbursement of kindergarten expenses). Each employee is free to select the elements of her/his benefit package on a yearly basis.

3. Table: The amount of childcare and healthcare benefits spent in 2021

Type of benefit	Altogether	For women	For men
Healthcare benefits	3 172 912 HUF	1 602 912 HUF	1 570 000 HUF
Child care benefits	20 000 HUF	20 000 HUF	-

We regularly organise evening events with the name "CESCI Light" with the aim to broaden the knowledge horizons of our staff and strengthen the community spirit. Some of the events are specifically aimed at families with young children. Moreover, regular one or more-day long team-building programs also serve to strengthen the community.

4 Gender Equality Action Plan

Based on the results of the situation assessment and the opinions and suggestions of the employees, the following gender equality actions were formulated for the period 2021-2027.

4.1 Gender equality in management, decision-making, work organisation and scientific activities of the organisation

The executive body of the association is the Presidential Board, which consisted of 6 members in 2021 (the president, 2 vice presidents and 3 full members). The members of the Board are elected primarily from among the members of the association, and the term of office for the members is for a definite period of three years. In 2022 the number of the members of the Board will increase to 8 (the president, 2 vice presidents and 5 full members).

In 2021, the work organisation of the association was managed by the Secretary General and the Director. From 2022, the high-level management duties will be carried out by 3 persons, the Secretary General and two Directors in accordance with the principles of responsibility sharing set out in the amended Statutes of the association.

In 2022, the work organisation consists of 6 female and 7 male employees, 2 of them (2 women) perform administrative tasks. Of the professional staff, 9 individuals are senior (4 women and 5 men) and 2 individuals (2 men) are junior employees.

The inaugural meeting of the Research Group on Border Studies (Határmenti Együttműködések Kutatóműhely – HEK) was held on 24 March 2022, and it was established on 3 December 2021 as the fourteenth scientific and professional research group of the National University of Public Service (NKE). The research group provides an institutional framework in the cooperation between the National University of Public Service (NKE) and the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI), which is able to bring together civil society and academic spheres as well as combining theoretical research with practical implementation. During the collaboration, CESCI, as a recognised international expert organisation, contributes to the effective operation of the joint work with its extensive scientific contacts and many years of professional experience, while the NKE contributes to it with its academic research network and extensive higher education capacities. Our association has delegated 3 researchers (1 woman and 2 men) to the Research Group.

Professional and human quality, as well as performance, are and continue to be the primary aspect for a position, held as an officer or in a work organization, and for the associated payment for it. At the same time, the Association continues to deny any forms discrimination based on origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender or other aspects.

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
1.1 Approaching gender equality in the Presidential Board	Enlargement of the Board and improving the gender distribution of mandates and annual monitoring	Share of women in the Board	16,67%	-	Secretary General	2022-2027
1.2. Approaching gender equality in the top management of the work organisation	Enlargement of the top management of the work organisation, taking into account gender equality	Share of women in the top management	0%	33,3%	Secretary General	2022
	Monitoring salary differences between genders in the top management	Pay gap between female and male top managers	n.r.	0%	Officer	2022-2027
1.3 Approaching gender equality in the work organisation	Monitoring salary differences between genders regarding the scope of activities and the years of employment within the organisation	Pay gap between female and male employees in the case of non-chief senior and junior employees	0%	0%	Officer	2022-2027
		Pay gap between non-chief female and male researchers	n.r.	0%	Officer	2022-2027
	Approaching and annual monitoring of gender equality among the members delegated to the research group in case of increasing the number of employees delegated to the research group	Share of female researchers	33,3%	-	Secretary General	2022-2027
1.4 Developing an institutional structure supporting gender equality	Appointing a gender equality officer and dedicating working hours to carry out the tasks. The primary task of the officer is to implement the measures set out in the Plan. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> preparing recommendations, proposals, 	Number of gender equality officers	0	1	Directors	2022

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organising training courses, monitoring the implementation of the Plan, data collection, preparing annual reports, ensuring the principles listed in point 2 of the Plan. 					

4.2 Gender equality in recruitment and career development

The recruitment process was not regulated by any formal guidelines in the past, but the professional suitability and human quality of the applicants were the primary evaluation criteria in all the cases. We intend to define the relevant guidelines primarily along these values also in the future, supplementing them with the gender balance intention.

For years, CESCI has been eager to strengthen the professionalism of its work organization. This has been done through regular organizing and offering of various training opportunities to the employees. What is more, the employees are provided with the opportunity to continue their studies, through individual study contracts, according to their needs.

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
2.1. Ensuring gender equality during recruitment	Definition of new recruitment guidelines, with particular attention to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to pursuit gender equality among the candidates called for the job interview; taking into account the possible obstacles of the applicants who have been temporarily excluded from the labour market due to childcare; gender equality among the interviewers 	Collection of guidelines	0	1	Officer	2022

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
	Annual monitoring of the application of recruitment guidelines	Proportion of women among the interviewed	n.a.	-	Officer	2022-2027
		Proportion of women among the interviewers	n.a.	-	Officer	2022-2027
2.2 Ensuring gender equality in career development	Striving for gender equality in the domain of labour development (participation at ad hoc trainings, institutional training structures) and annual monitoring	Proportion of female and male employees in the training	50%-50%	-	Directors	2022-2027

4.3 Work - private life balance and organizational culture

Since the establishment of the Association, it has given significant emphasis on creating flexible working frames in order to support its employees in establishing a balance between work and private lives, which reflects their current life situation (studying, rural housing, health issues, having children, etc.).

According to the values of the Association, having children should not be an obstacle to the professional ambition of the employees; subsequently, this document also expresses the commitment to support the employees who are raising children.

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
3.1. Providing working time and other benefits in order to establish a balance between work and private life	Continuation of practice of providing flexible working frames, including flexible working hours, part-time work and teleworking opportunities	n.r.	-	.	Directors	2022-2027
	Providing part-time employment contract at the initiative of an employee who raises a child under the age of 10	Proportion of accepted part-time applications	100%	100%	Directors	2022-2027

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
	In addition to the statutory additional leave, provision of an additional 5-day working time allowance for fathers, which can be used within one year of the birth of a child	Proportion of the accepted extra days off request	0%	100%	Directors	2022-2027
	Developing and continuously implementing a system of one-time financial support for the birth of a child of the employee	Proportion of the employee, having a child, who received a one-time financial support	0%	100%	Directors	2022-2027
	Individual working hours and other benefits for the employees dealing with health problems	n.r.			Directors	2022-2027
3.2 Contact with the employees who are their on parental leave	Meeting opportunities within CESCI Light and within other informal frames and continuation of the established good practice	Number of family meetings in a year	1	1	Officer	2022-2027

4.4 Raising awareness about prejudice and sexism

CESCI has always avoided any discrimination on the basis of gender, it has avoided any distinction based on religion, ideology, nationality or gender identity during the employment of the employees. We intend to continue this principle and the present Plan primarily helps to raise the awareness during work organization and recruitment.

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
4.1 Organizing of sensitization training	Organizing a training for all the employees with the involvement of an external NGO with experience in the subject.	Number of training opportunities	0	1	Officer	2022
4.2 Informing of the new employees of the Association	Informing the new employees about gender equality measures upon their entry	Proportion of the informed new employees	0%	100%	Officer	2022-2027

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
4.3 Striving for gender equality at the event of the Association	Striving to increase the proportion of female speakers (taking into account the aptness) during organizing professional events and annual monitoring	Number of invited female speakers at the events	n.r.	-	Secretary General	2022-2027
		Proportion of female speakers at the professional events	35%			

4.5 Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Directive 2002/73/EC defined sexual harassment as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, be it either verbal, non-verbal or physical, with the aim or effect of violating the dignity of the concerned person, and particularly if it creates an environment that is intimidating, hostile, humiliating, shameful, or offensive.

Considering that our employees often work with external partners; consequently, measures against sexual harassment should not only cover the cases within the Association itself, but it should cover also the cases that emerge during external cooperation.

Action	Measure	Indicator	Initial rate	Target	Responsible	Period
5.1. Develop a procedure and rules for a gender equality complaint	Defining and sharing of the procedures and consequences for reporting and investigating sexual harassment with the employees	Manual that contains procedures and rules	0	1	Officer	2022
	Monitoring and handling of complaints of sexual harassment that are processed according to the procedure	Proportion of handled complaints	n.r.	100%	Officer	2022-2027

5 Monitoring and review

For the next six-year period (2022-2027), the Plan identified the objectives that the Association intends to achieve in order to maintain and to promote gender equality.

The officer is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Plan. He/she continuously monitors and annually reports about the implementation of the Plan to the directors, thus indicating the achieved results and any obstacles that may arise. The Association publishes the annual report on its website. If an interim change or supplement to the Gender Equality Plan becomes necessary, the working group will develop a proposal in order to amend it.