

# GENDER-BASED ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT

## RECOMMENDATION :

*Aligning human resource strategies and management tools  
to EU policies*

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The above should be defined as part of the institutional-level implementation of current EU and Italian policy framework on Gender and Science in the 7th and 8th FP, as well as of the “EU Charter for Researchers” (see below), as follows:

- The Italian Ministry of University and Scientific Research and the Department for Equal Opportunities have developed a set of policy orientation documents to support gender equality in science.<sup>1</sup>
- The Italian Ministry of University and Scientific Research and the Department for Equal Opportunities have also produced a Draft National Plan of Action to enforce the European Charters for Researchers (and the Code of Conduct for recruitment of researchers). This frame include actions at normative level, but also initiatives that may and should be taken directly by public institutions for its its HR strategy<sup>2</sup>.

On December 13th 2005, the Italian Public Research Institution representatives met at Campidoglio (the City Hall of Rome) and adopted the European Research Charter (ERC) and the Code of conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, making a formal declaration of commitment. The same formal obligation was adopted by INFN (deliberazione n.9415 Consiglio Direttivo – 20/12/2005.)

But analysing the consequences of these declarations, and the actions of Italian Governments from 2005, on the Italian researchers, with a special care for the Italian Public Research Institutions (PRI – EPR in Italian) and their researchers, we note that the results are very poor. Due also to the economical and financial crisis, there are almost no signs of future amelioration. Generally, in Italy, the culture of evaluation is hardly establishing. Evaluation processes do not start on time and universities as well as PRIs don't use them much.

But the INFN must do en effort to manifest his “excellence” also in this regard: the INFN could take this opportunity to define a set of practical actions to be taken, including adopting and giving practical effect to the Minerva Code: “Transparency for Excellence”, as planned in the last AAPs.

One of the more important item of the ERC is:

*ERC: Recruitment and selection procedures for researchers must be clear, equal, effective and based on credits.*

It is hard to say that INFN selections have a high level of openness, the “concorso” selection procedure for researchers is at the moment is not sufficiently fair. The adoption

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<sup>1</sup>Tavolo di Concertazione MIUR –DPO “Azioni per favorire l'avanzamento delle carriere scientifiche delle donne” ; MIUR – DPO “Documento di indirizzo sulla diversità di genere” ;

<sup>2</sup>MIUR-DPO “Piano d’Azione Nazionale per la realizzazione del Partneriato Europeo per i Ricercatori” .

of the “Minerva code”<sup>3</sup> would certainly improve the procedure openness and credibility.

On the coherence with others European Researchers Charter (ECR) principles we underline:<sup>4</sup>

*ECR: Researchers must not be discriminated on the basis of gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin, ...*

These discriminations are prohibited by the Italian Constitution. Nevertheless women turn out to have more difficulties in their career and there are less women in managerial positions compared to their total number.

*ECR: Researchers should have, as much as possible, stable employment contracts*

This is probably the most critical point, where during the last few years researchers conditions have continuously worsened, although some countermeasures have been introduced, like the stabilization of many fixed-term workers in all public institutions (Budgetary Law 2007) and the opening, for a short period, of new staff positions (which has been recently stopped, as a matter of fact). Clearly, such problems are mainly due to general Italian research policy, but became much tougher at INFN due to the overall staff reduction, which is now clearly unfit to the quality and quantity of INFN research activities. Moreover, the INFN management realized too late that the personnel situation was getting dramatic and did not intervene to stop the continuous increasing of all kind of fixed term contracts, with the result of keeping inside INFN a number of young researchers exceeding by far the number of future staff contract envisageable and for periods exceeding by far any reasonable training time.

If, on the one hand, INFN is still able to attract young researchers, both for the quality of its research activity and for its still remarkable organization, on the other hand it is not able anymore to provide a clear and well defined (in terms of duration and success probability) access path to staff positions.

*ECR: Researchers should have fair and attractive conditions, in terms of funding, salaries, social security provisions, sickness and parental benefits, pension rights, unemployment benefits ...*

The use of very flexible employment contracts for researchers, like the so called “Continuative Coordinate Collaboration” or the “assegno di ricerca” is now strongly limited by the INFN management, but few years ago the number of such kind of contracts had increased above any acceptable limit, resulting in a sort of exploitation of young researchers’ work. Working conditions are generally acceptable for what concerns social security

However, funding and salaries are little attractive compared to other Countries.

*ERC: There should be specific career development strategies for researchers.*

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3 The Minerva Code, approved in Brussels on June 2005 and aimed at having clear and equal recruitment, selection and financing procedures for researchers, establishes that:

1. all calls must be published at least 2 months before selection,
2. all evaluation criterion must be published on the call;
3. curricula of evaluation commission members must be published;
4. curricula of candidates must be published;
5. curricula of winners must be published.

4 “White paper about public researcher condition in Italy “ 2012 - ANPRI - <http://www.anpri.it/>

INFN is one of the few Italian public Research Institution which kept over several years an almost regular rate of career opportunities for researchers. However, both staff and budget limitations have prevented INFN from making available a number of higher level research positions adequate to recognize the professional skills and the scientific excellence which are widespread between its researchers, especially for the woman.

*ERC: Researchers must be represented in consultation, decision-making and information bodies of the institutions for which they work.*

This is traditionally considered the key of INFN success over more than half a century of life: it has always been granted to all scientific community members the right to access not only to the consultation and information boards of the institution, but also to the governing bodies up to the top management level. However this representation, during last years, has now become an issue more formal than actual. Besides, it should be noted that such great cultural heritage of the scientists full participation to the research management, is now undergoing a reformation process whose final shape is not yet defined, and in general it suffers from continuously changing rules.

Finally inside the Institute work is still ongoing in order to include the maternity and parental leaves in the career track system. Inside the Italian law, there are some challenge for INFN to extend a protection to people holding non-permanent position and to evaluate parental leave in a fair way in the access to permanent position.