

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

V1.0

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Introduction

Photoconsortium is an international association devoted to promoting the riches of the photographic heritage collections in Europe. Photoconsortium was established in 2014 under the Italian law, it is based in Italy and it is subject to the Italian regulations for non for profit organizations. However, the members of Photoconsortium are institutions, organizations and individuals from all over Europe and thus the dimension and activities of Photoconsortium are European-based.

Photoconsortium is, first of all, an alliance of men and women with a stake on cultural photographic heritage, who have common goals and interests with no reference or prejudice to gender. The need for a Gender Equality Plan derives from two important considerations:

- In the context of EU-funded projects and calls, the gender issue is more and more in focus for all sectors including the cultural heritage sector. Given the high participation rate of Photoconsortium in proposals for calls funded in Horizon Europe and other funding programmes of the European Union, it is felt as important to formalize the existing, but yet unspecified, orientation towards gender equality into a more concrete reflection that brings to awareness-raising and planning;
- Expectations and efforts in Photoconsortium are directed towards fostering growth of the organization, job creation, and network expansion. This will generate the need for more structured rules and internal provisions in the future, to grant that no biases of any type affect the work life and well-being of employees and other stakeholders who are involved with Photoconsortium's activities and processes.

This document opens with information about the Italian and international context analysis from a gender perspective, with a specific focus on the status of gender balance and equality in the cultural heritage sector, also indicating some guidelines, initiatives and resources that are available for improving and addressing the issue in the cultural heritage sector. Also, in consideration of the fact that Photoconsortium is an accredited aggregator of Europeana (the flagship initiative of the European Union on digital cultural heritage), details on the diversity and inclusion approach in the Europeana network are provided, given that Photoconsortium fully embraces and collaborates to this vision.

The organization context of Photoconsortium is delineated, describing the management bodies and staff from a gender perspective. Objectives and goals of GEP and the structure of key areas of actions are provided. The expected impact at this stage is mainly related to awareness-raising and to setting the basis for granting gender equality measures that keep the pace with the expected growth of the association in the future.



Context analysis from a gender perspective

The National and International Context

The Italian Gender Equality regulatory framework is represented by the **National Code of Equal Opportunities** between men and women approved in 2006 (DL 198/2006), that organises 11 equal opportunity laws in a single text with the aim of regulating the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women in all fields of society. Measures to reconcile professional life and family life are included in numerous rules governing the labour market and funds have been allocated to promote further working typologies more compatible with the family care and the creation of an appropriate social infrastructure. The Budget Law (L. 205/2017 art 1, paragraph 218), which introduces two further paragraphs to art. 26 of Legislative Decree 198/2006 (entitled “Harassment and sexual harassment” of the Code of equal opportunities between men and women), recognises broader protections for female workers and for male workers who report discrimination owing to harassment or sexual harassment. Family Law (L. 151/1975) recognises a perfect equality between men and women and confers the same rights to children born in and out of marriage. However, care of children in the first years of their life is still mainly delegated to women: in 2015 the paternity leave in Italy was only 1 day, subsequently increased to 2 days in 2016¹. Only in 2018 the compulsory paternity leave in Italy was increased up to 4 days. With the Legislative Decree DL 80/2015, implementing the Jobs Act, measures have been introduced to protect maternity and to make parental leave more flexible. Parental leave, for example, has been extended to the child’s 12 years of age.

Gender equality is a core value of the EU fundamental rights² and also a precondition for cultural diversity. The European Commission has launched **EU Gender Equality Strategy** running 2020-2025³, to set out key actions in gender equality and commitments to ensuring that the Commission will include an equality perspective in all EU policy areas. The promotion of gender equality and the fight against gender discrimination are twin goals of the EU, including in culture. More details about the cultural heritage sector from a gender perspective are provided in the next paragraph.

The Cultural Heritage sector

In September 2019, a brainstorming session took place in Prague as part of the Voices of Culture event focusing on Gender Equality: **Gender Balance in the cultural and creative sectors**⁴. Stakeholders from countries across the European Union discussed the relevant issues and jointly brainstormed about gender inequality and discrimination in all cultural fields as well as about specific means of addressing existing gaps, barriers and issues. Four focus groups were created that worked on jointly identified priority issues:

- Equal access for women to the labour market and leadership positions
- Gender stereotypes, representation and role models
- An end to sexual violence

¹ Source: www.inps.it.

² Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), Articles 8, 10, 19 and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and Articles 21 and 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_357

⁴ <https://voicesofculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VoC-Brainstorming-Report-Gender-Balance-in-the-Cultural-and-Creative-Sectors.pdf>

- Systemic gender discrimination

The report is structured around the above-mentioned four topics. Each one is introduced in a specific chapter highlighting the problem; outlining action that needs to be taken as well as specific examples that serve as “good practice”. The aim of the exercise was to highlight that gender equality, being a pillar of cultural diversity, has to be addressed at all levels of cultural policy making.

There is already sufficient data to prove that discrimination and inequality exists and to inform clear-cut conclusions and build new policy frameworks in order to take cross-sectoral action, as well as to make financial resources available for funding specific types of gender empowerment programmes. According to Eurostat data from 2020⁵, European women participate actively in culture to a greater extent than men. Women also constitute 47.7% of cultural employment, compared with 45.9% in the total economy, with the Baltic Member States recording the highest female shares of cultural employment (65% in Latvia, 61% in Lithuania and 59% in Estonia) while the lowest shares of women were recorded in three southern countries: Italy and Spain each at 43% and Malta, 42%.

Additionally, looking at the specific situation and role of female artists and of female cultural professionals working in the Cultural and Creative Sector, inequalities and structural discrimination become apparent. The EU report “**Towards gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors**”⁶ provides recommendations and an overview of over 250 good practices from all over the EU to improve the working conditions of women and to close gender gaps in the cultural and creative sectors. According to the report, accessing the necessary resources and asserting oneself in the cultural and creative labour market represents a challenge to women due to the flexible, project-based and freelance nature of working. The need for self-promotion and frequent travel are other sources of challenges for women in these sectors.

Although gender inequalities differ across the various sub-sectors in the cultural field and between EU Member States, overall women are confronted with similar obstacles and impediments on their career paths:

- Women are under-represented in leadership and decision-making positions
- Women are generally paid much less than men
- Women lack equal access to creation and production resources,
- Women’s work is often less visible, underappreciated and under-recognised.

Another major gender gap pertains to care work. In many countries, lack of access to structured social welfare supports and schemes - parental leave, child care and pensions - cause that women are forced to take over the bulk of unpaid care duties and thus face more challenges in combining paid work and private life. In the longer run, there are cumulative effects of a lifetime’s gendered employment pattern (e.g. higher use of part-time work and career breaks by women) which negatively impact female pensions and generate subsequent higher levels of poverty for older women.

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

⁶ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/36e9028b-c73b-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1>

The report provides a series of recommendations to policy makers at EU and national level that aim for a unified and practical approach to achieving gender equality and diversity.

1. Lead by example – ensure gender equality in the workplace:

Adopt a proactive stance to ensuring equality of access, opportunities and outcomes for all employees irrespective of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, religion, physical appearance, disability, age, parenthood, citizenship, and social or geographical origin.

Ensure gender parity and inclusion of marginalised groups especially in management and leadership roles and in recruitment processes, also providing women and men equally with feedback on their work.

Use gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive language to help improving gender equality.

Apply zero tolerance to sexual harassment, sexism and gender violence.

Create flexible working conditions that will help to reconcile the private life of the staff with their professional career. This does not only apply to women: encourage men to take on an equal share of care work, ensuring that any gender can take parental leave.

2. Mainstream gender equality into policies and promote it via a legal framework and funding: this means putting in place a coherent legal framework complemented with sound policies and dedicated funding.

3. Implement gender budgeting: better and targeted distribution of public resources is crucial for empowering women, addressing their needs and interests, and achieving gender equality.

4. Support data collection and research on gender inequalities: collecting and monitoring data on gender inequalities is the best tool to monitor the implementation of different action plans and measure actual progress. Research is needed to better understand the processes that impact gender equality.

5. Use culture, media, education and research as a means to promote gender equality: it is necessary to raise awareness on and promote the importance of gender equality and the role of culture to this end, advocating for change, and to promote research on gender equality in the culture sectors and the role of culture in promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Finally, the COVID crisis can be an opportunity for transformative change: the COVID-19 recovery represents a significant opportunity to advance women as we seek to rebuild our economies and our societies in a different way.

The Europeana initiative and its approach to diversity and inclusion

PHOTOCONSORTIUM is also the expert hub on photography for Europeana.eu and operates as accredited aggregator for photographic collections, supporting public and private photographic archives in making their metadata available for Europeana. Due to this close collaboration, PHOTOCONSORTIUM is an active participant well acknowledged in the Europeana initiative and as such is embracing the effort to improve gender equality and other inclusive actions for a change in the cultural heritage sector.

Europeana is the access point to over 50 million digitized cultural objects from European museums and cultural institutions, and it also gathers user-generated content, for example in collections campaigns about the WWI, Migration, 1989 and other initiatives for citizen participation in cultural heritage. These 50 million objects certainly offer a high level of diversity, showcasing content from cultural institutions all over Europe. However, the issue of inequality permeates the museum sector as well as Europeana itself⁷, because the cultural collections are the result of historical choices made by someone (often a western male in charge of taking decisions) who decided which story is worth telling and which one is not. Of course, it does not only disadvantage women: the questions entangled here also count for people of colour, colonized or marginalized cultures without an inherited treasure of cultural and economic capital, people with disabilities, members of the LGBT community, migrants and many more. Thus, a bias inherent to museums' collections could be seen as being reinforced through the choices during the digitization process. And these biases are taken to Europeana to some degree at last, as on the portal there still are a lot more objects from Western European cultural heritage, and there are more thematic collections that focus on cultural heritage perceived as elitist such as art or photography rather than other cultural expressions.

Towards the end of 2020, the Europeana Foundation made its commitment to **Diversity and Inclusion**⁸. Acknowledging that the Europeana Foundation have always been committed to increasing understanding and promotion of diversity, there is awareness of the need of improving efforts to learn and evolve as an organisation to represent and include the whole of society in the work that Europeana does as organization and within the cultural heritage sector.

Since the beginning 10 years ago, the focus was on bringing together the diversity of domains within the cultural heritage sector, helping museums, galleries, libraries and archives to talk to each other and recognise and navigate issues they share. Over the years, Europeana run public campaigns like Europeana Migration⁹, promoting the positive role of migration in our rich European history; while more recently we started contributing to Women's History Month¹⁰ with blogs, galleries and exhibitions on our collections website and our season on Women in Culture and Technology on our professional website. Organisationally, Europeana also has a 'No woman, no panel' policy for staff members invited to present at events. Europeana is committed to continue these, and other initiatives, such as making diversity and inclusivity an ongoing element of the editorials produced from the collections, also looking at how to further address the range of issues relating to diversity and inclusivity, particularly the diversity of ethnic backgrounds, awareness of which continues to increase due to the global actions of the Black Lives Matter movement.

In close collaboration with the Europeana Network Association and Aggregators' Forum, which together with the Foundation constitute the pillars of the Europeana initiative, the effort will continue to advocate for diversity and inclusion at all levels, fostering a better understanding of the challenges in our sector and developing a roadmap of actions and activities.

⁷ <https://medium.com/open-glam/gender-discrimination-in-the-cultural-heritage-sector-b171d2d52c86>

⁸ <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/next-steps-for-the-europeana-foundation-on-diversity-and-inclusivity>

⁹ <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/looking-back-at-the-europeana-migration-campaign>

¹⁰ <https://www.europeana.eu/en/womens-history>



The organization's context

PHOTOCONSORTIUM – International Consortium for Photographic Heritage is a non for profit association devoted to the promotion and enhancement of the culture of photography and photographic heritage, and is committed in the areas of digital cultural heritage, access and reuse of cultural content, citizens' engagement and education. All the initiatives of the Association are primarily devoted to serving the interests of its members. PHOTOCONSORTIUM participates, and promotes the participation of its members, in projects and initiatives, including but not limited to participation in the Programmes of the European Commission, and organizes photographic exhibitions, co-creation and participative events, seminars and conferences, and training courses.

PHOTOCONSORTIUM has been established with a democratic structure, political independence, and unlimited duration. PHOTOCONSORTIUM allows membership to both natural and legal persons, public or private bodies, companies, and associations. Founded in 2014, the association aims to enlarge its network internationally and welcomes new members sharing its aims.

Management Bodies

The decision body of the Photoconsortium association is the General Assembly of Members, which regularly meets once a year to approve the activity report and financial sheet, and to discuss and agree planning and goals for the future. Each member organization is represented with an appointed participant at the meetings. An analysis of the participation list for Photoconsortium's GA shows that the gender perspective in these meetings reflects the current status of the cultural heritage sector, where women are slightly less represented than men.

The General Assembly appoints with elections every 5 years the main management body, which is the Steering Committee, invested with all powers to decide on the actions to be taken and on the criteria for the achievement and implementation of the goals of the association and its ordinary and extraordinary direction and administration. Photoconsortium's Steering Committee is composed of 12 elected persons. The current group was elected in October 2019 and will run the mandate for 5 years.

Members in alphabetical order:

- John Balean (UK) - male
- Erik Buelinckx (BE) - male
- Peter Fornaro (CH) - male
- Antonella Fresa (IT) - female
- Frank Golomb (DE) - male
- David Iglésias Franch (ES) - male
- Pilar Irala Hortal (ES) - female
- Allison Kupietzky (IL) - female
- Pietro Masi (IT) - male
- Sofie Taes (BE) - female
- Frederik Temmermans (BE) – male
- Fred Truyen (BE) - male

The Steering Committee appoints from among its members the President of the association, the Vice-president acting as secretary-general, the treasurer, and up to five councillors with specific roles. They constitute the executive council of the association.

Executive Council for the period 2019-2024 is composed of:

- President: David Iglésias Franch
- Vice-president: Antonella Fresca
- Treasurer: Pietro Masi
- Councillors: Fred Truyen, Sofie Taes, Frederik Temmermans, Peter Fornaro, John Balean

The power of attorney and the legal representation of the association are conferred, in disjointed way, to the President and Vice-president of the association. One male and one female cover respectively these roles with equal powers.

Staff

Staff at Photoconsortium currently include three permanent employees, one male part time, one female full time, and one female part time.

Additional staff is recruited with project-based contracts according to the needs of capacity and expertise of each project. At the time of this report (March 2023) there are two additional members of the staff employed for the EUreka3D project (2023-2024): one male and one female.

Overall objectives and goals of GEP in Photoconsortium

As mentioned in the introduction, at Photoconsortium the general approach of staff, members and stakeholders seems not to be affected by specific gender issues or prejudices; however, in the management bodies of the association it is reflected the status of the cultural heritage sector, where women are slightly under-represented. For this reason, the GEP at Photoconsortium has the primary objective to raise awareness and formalize concrete actions to fight gender inequalities, gender-based violence and other forms of harassment. Also, with this GEP Photoconsortium aims at becoming a role model for other small and private organizations in the cultural heritage sector.

Following the classification provided by the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans, the objectives of GEP in Photoconsortium are at the basis of key areas to be addressed for ensuring that no gender biases affect the life and work at Photoconsortium. The five areas which constitute the structure of GEP and how Photoconsortium addresses each of them are described in detail in the next section.

Publication of the GEP

Gender equality in Photoconsortium is considered an important aspect of the commitment to diversity and inclusion in the cultural heritage sector that Photoconsortium embraces. For this reason, and irrespectively of the current small size of the staff, a Gender Equality Plan is deemed necessary already at this stage. The GEP was created internally, taking into account the guidelines from EIGE European Institute for Gender Equality¹¹ and the advice received from experts at CNR-IRPPS Institute for Research on Population and

¹¹ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>



PHOTOCONSORTIUM

International Consortium for Photographic Heritage

Social Policies at CNR National Research Council of Italy¹². The GEP demonstrates a commitment to gender equality and sets clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them. The draft plan was discussed in the Steering Committee, and shared to the General Assembly of members as an open and living document, to be expanded and updated according to needs and developments of the organization.

The current version of Photoconsortium's GEP is published on the organization's website at <http://www.photoconsortium.net/association/gender-equality-plan/>

Dedicated resources to GEP

Due to the current staff size of the organization, no specific resources in gender equality are allocated from Photoconsortium's budget, however the commitment to grant gender balance in any action implemented by Photoconsortium will be considered. In case of recruitment of additional staff (either permanent or project-based), the aspect on gender will be taken in due account in case of equal competences of the candidates.

Data collection and monitoring

Data about gender of the participants in the General Assembly and of the members of the other association's bodies will be considered to monitor the issue, encouraging larger female participation if needed.

Awareness-raising/training

This GEP and its dissemination in Photoconsortium's General Assembly of Members and in other bodies of the association is the first effort to support awareness-raising on gender equality and on unconscious gender biases in the cultural heritage sector. The GEP will be published and promoted on Photoconsortium's website and blog, and made visible to the network of peers and colleagues. Additionally, Photoconsortium is committed to participate in training and communication activities on gender equality, also focusing on specific topics or addresses specific groups, promoted within the Europeana network and in the cultural heritage sector as a whole.

Structure of the GEP

Key area 1: Integration of the gender dimension into projects and other institutional activities

The strategies in this priority area are mainly aimed at affirming the gender perspective in proposals and projects that Photoconsortium leads or participates in, by including in the involved staff a balanced mix of male and female staff.

Promotion of female photographers in history or of other women who stand out in the field of heritage and digital photography is one of the topics to be covered in editorials produced and published in the Photoconsortium's blog.

¹² <https://www.irpps.cnr.it/en/>

Additionally, actions envisioned to improve use of gender sensitive language include the analysis of communication practices in internal and official communication practices and document writing.

Key area 2: Work-life balance and organisational culture

As the central aspect in any activity related to the affirmation of equal opportunities, the strategies in this priority area are mainly aimed at strengthening measures to ensure a better balance between work commitments and family responsibilities, also promoting work-family balance and positively affecting the employees' well-being in the workplace. This is part of the organizational culture in Photoconsortium that supports flexibility, creativity, and openness, to establish an environment of trust based on ability, integrity and benevolence - not only to support gender equality, but as a management style.

To support work-family balance, the permanent employees benefit from the regulations of the National Collective Labour Contracts which allow for parental leaves, breastfeeding leaves, maternity leave, and similar provisions. Possibilities for smart working and teleworking will be considered in case of need. A certain degree of flexibility in the working hours is allowed on occasions, upon request.

Project-based employees have the freedom to work in a flexible way, not being subject to standard working hours and timetables, provided they accomplish the tasks they are assigned to under the supervision of their responsible person.

All the employees report their worked hours in monthly timesheets which indicate the total of hours worked in the month, indication of hours worked for specific projects, absences. The timesheets are counterchecked by the employee's responsible person and formally approved.

Key area 3: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Photoconsortium supports the career and excellence of female researchers, technical and administrative staff. Examples of actions include: encourage female staff and members to publish articles and participate in conferences in the cultural heritage sector; nurture the international visibility of female staff and members with project management roles; foster career changes and extension of tasks and responsibilities; facilitate education and university paths initiated or desired by employees.

Key area 4: Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

The strategies in this priority area are mainly aimed at ensuring and improving a gender balance in the top positions and in the decision-making bodies. Currently, the compositions of the Steering Committee and Executive Council reflect the status of the cultural heritage sector where women are slightly under-represented than men: however, in the association men and women have the same opportunities to access decision-making bodies. It is worth to mention though that the two highest positions in the Association (President and Vice-president) are equally covered by a male and a female, with equal powers, in the awareness of the differences and complementarities between men and women in approaching leadership roles.

Key area 5: Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Photoconsortium rejects not only gender-based violence, but any kind of violence including mobbing, ageism, bullying and harassment. As a strategy to be implemented in the future, Photoconsortium will

establish channels to report (either anonymously or not) disrespectful behaviours, abuse and sexual or racial harassment, to be brought to the attention of the Steering Committee which will be in charge to manifest repercussions on the harasser.

Expected impact

The implemented GEP is proposing useful strategies for supporting women's careers in Photoconsortium and for improving life-work conditions for both genders, with particular attention to women. It sets the basis for a more evident gender-equality awareness and practices in the organization, especially in the light of the expected growth which hopefully will generate increased employment of personnel and other collaborations. The impact in the long term is linked to the expected increased individual and collective awareness of gender equality issues, of the need for combating violence and prejudices, and of the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion in the cultural heritage sector and networks.

Consulted resources

- EIGE - The European Institute for Gender Equality. [What is a Gender Equality Plan \(GEP\)?](#)
- European Commission (2019). [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#).
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2021). [Towards gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors](#).
- Voices of Culture (2019). [Gender Balance in the Cultural and Creative Sectors](#)