

## Plan for improving of gender equality

### History and introduction

Gender equality is one of the essential human rights, protected by the United Nations and is a core value of the European Union. Improving of the gender equality can be achieved at both national and institutional level by involving all stakeholders and ensuring appropriate action.

The Republic of North Macedonia is a landlocked country with about 2 million inhabitants and is a country aspiring to become a member of the European Union. According to the data from the State Statistical Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, the distribution of women and men at the level of the total population is almost equal, 49.9% of the population are women, while 50.1% are men.

The Republic of North Macedonia regulates the national system for establishing equal opportunities for women and men, rights and responsibilities in ensuring this equality, as well as providing structures to support and promote equal opportunities between women and men at different levels. The main law that regulates gender equality in the Republic of North Macedonia is the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the institution responsible for implementing this policy is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy which is currently developing a new National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021. -2026.

In 2011, the Republic of North Macedonia signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and ratified the Convention at the end of 2017. The Republic of North Macedonia has also developed a National Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention (2018-2023). In 2019, the Republic of North Macedonia published its own Gender Equality Index of 62 points. According to the analysis of the European Institute for Gender Equality, the gender equality index is just below the European Union average of 67.4 points. This puts the country in 16th place compared to the European Union countries. In the field of power, the country has better results than the European Union. The Republic of North Macedonia has 52.6 points, compared to the EU average of 51.9. However, inequalities remain, especially when it comes to income and earnings, as well as the sharing of responsibilities in households.

### Vision and mission

MARnet has a vision and mission to grow into an institution with a high national and international reputation in the field of operations.

MARnet as an institution provides services at the national level and performs international connection of the Macedonian academic research and educational community and supports their research and educational activities; promotes and disseminates the use of information and communication technologies, especially in the academic and research sectors; MARnet also maintains and manages the

national DNS, performs international representation and membership; policy making and development of the national academic network.

MARnet performs the following activities:

- manages the closed telecommunication network,
- encourages the development of the closed telecommunication network,
- plans, organizes and manages the connections between the users of telecommunication services,
- manages and performs the works for procurement and renting of the necessary program, material and communication equipment,
- organizes and conducts trainings and provides professional assistance to the users of telecommunication services,
- manages macedonian national domains (.mk and .mkd domains),
- provides membership and cooperation with relevant international organizations,
- performs computer activities related to research and experimental development in natural and technical-technological sciences,
- performs software-related activities (prepares, publishes, provides consultations),
- performs hardware consulting,
- maintains a database and processes data,
- keeps a single Register of registered subdomains in the MK domain (hereinafter: the Register),
- maintains telecommunication systems in the closed telecommunication network,
- performs publishing activity related to the realization of telecommunication services,
- performs activities related to the reproduction of computer media;
- performs services on the closed telecommunication network for performing the programs of educational activities;
- performs activities related to the connection of the closed telecommunication network to the users of telecommunication services;
- provides professional and technical connection with related telecommunication networks abroad;
- establishes, maintains and develops cooperation with other telecommunication networks in the Republic of Macedonia and abroad; and
- performs other activities determined by law.

#### **Key values / special ethical obligations**

The Code for Administrative Servants adopted by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration describes the special ethical duties of employees in institutions.

Article 9 of the Code of Administrative Servants enshrines the principle of equality and justice and prohibits all forms of discrimination, abuse, harassment, and exploitation. All administrative staff should be provided with equal conditions for fulfilment of professional responsibilities, expression of their intellectual abilities and promotions.

All forms of direct or indirect discrimination based on race, colour, origin, nationality or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, language, nationality, social origin, education, religion or religious belief, political belief, other belief, disability, age, marital status, property status, health status, social status or any other basis defined by the law or ratified international agreement.

The only criteria for evaluation and promotion are expertise, ability and professional merit, as well as ability and results in performing tasks and other activities.

### **Gender equality**

The Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, adopted the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which regulates the realization of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men, the basic and special measures for establishing equal opportunities for women and men, the rights and obligations of the responsible entities for providing equal opportunities for women and men, the procedure for determining unequal treatment of women and men, as well as the rights and duties of the Representative for equal opportunities for women and men, as a person responsible for determining unequal treatment of women and men.

In addition, MARnet is committed to promoting balance in leadership and decision-making positions and seeks to ensure non-discrimination and prohibits gender-based violence. The aspiration to adhere to the European values and principles in all activities undertaken by MARnet as an institution, participant in the Horizon Europe Framework Program, is shown by the development of the Gender Equality Plan (2022-2025).

MARnet's Plan for gender equality has been published and is visible on the MARnet website ([www.marnet.mk](http://www.marnet.mk)).

In terms of ongoing mechanisms for establishment and good practices for creating equal opportunities for women and men, MARnet has defined the following goals and responsibilities for:

- Demonstrating confidence in gender equality by setting goals and measures and monitoring their consistent implementation at all levels,
- Implementation of short-term and long-term activities in order to integrate the gender dimension in the work,
- Resistance to new challenges, including the impact most affected by the SOVID-19 pandemic of work practices,
- Staff training and capacity building as well as increasing competitiveness in order to apply for EU funding for a project within MARnet's scope of work and demonstrate gender equality as a priority;
- Raising awareness among employees and academia about gender equality;
- Providing full access to information, facilities, mobility and networking of all staff of all genders,
- Establishing a framework for cooperation for joint activities with other research networks in Europe and promoting equal opportunities between women and men,
- Facilitate direct cooperation and support of all processes in the selection and appointment of staff in commissions and other bodies of MARnet that have equal opportunities,

- Ensuring synergy and a good work environment at the leadership level and decisive positions that ensure gender balance and stimulate gender equality in career development.

This will help to achieve the goal arising from the development of the Gender Equality Plan, ie to improve the position of MARnet to achieve gender balance between the administrative staff and other stakeholders and provide equal opportunities regardless of gender.

MARnet will follow the main European strategic documents related to gender equality in the preparation and implementation of this gender equality plan such as Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025; European Commission: Striving for a Union of Equality, Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025; European Commission: Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans.

### **Developing a MARnet gender equality plan**

MARnet started developing and implementing a Gender Equality Plan through establishment of a Team in order to provide an assessment of the current situation and development of the plan. The team is composed of members who have previous experience in collecting data and questions on gender equality and implementing international projects.

### **Implementation and monitoring**

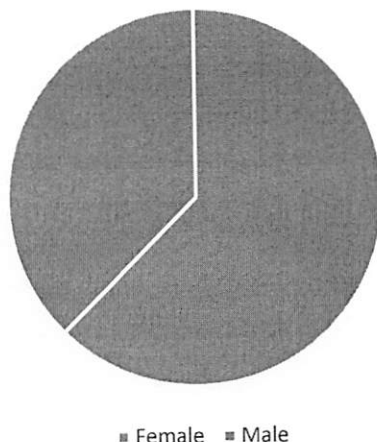
MARnet will dedicate its own resources, staff and financial resources to the implementation and monitoring of the MARnet Gender Equality Plan and will provide suggestions for improvements. All MARnet staff, at all levels, will be responsible for implementing the MARnet Gender Equality Plan, while monitoring and review will be provided by a selected MARnet Gender Equality Team.

The team will be equally represented by women and men, and will be appointed and approved by the Director of MARnet, no later than the second quarter of 2022. The impact of the implementation of the MARnet Gender Equality Plan will be identified by the Gender Equality Team. Annual progress reports will be provided by this Team and will be reviewed at MARnet Board meetings.

### **Mapping of existing conditions (revision)**

The development and implementation of the Gender Equality Plan in MARnet was positively recognized and is an opportunity for MARnet to demonstrate its current position on applying gender balance at the institution level and to take further steps to improve existing capacities and fill gaps if necessary. In this sense, MARnet has done internal mapping of the current situation and distribution of jobs by gender of the staff. This analysis shows potential areas for improvement and proposes joint activities and measures to apply gender balance throughout the institution.

### Macedonian academic research network



Regarding the collected data on the employees, the balance of the gender dimension of the employees in MARnet is evident.

#### Proposed approach to improve gender quality (planning)

Achieving gender equality and establishing balance in an institution is a prerequisite for successful implementation of quality standards, good working environment and improving the capacity for better positioning and increased competitiveness. MARnet, as an Institution in the Republic of North Macedonia will continue to apply for funding for project implementation in the framework program Horizon Europe, as it was in the previous programs Horizon 2020 and FP7. The importance of implementing such programs in MARnet is great.

MARnet proposes methods and approaches to improve gender equality in this Gender Equality Plan. The following table summarizes MARnet's involvement in the proposed approach to achieving improved gender equality and benefits. The proposed method is based on the findings regarding gender equality and the mapping that has already been done, where we see gender balance at every level, but there is certainly room for improvement. Conditions can be improved in terms of raising awareness, capacity building and promoting equal employment and promotion opportunities.

| Target group                               | Proposed measures to improve gender equality  | Expected results   |
|--|---|--|
| Administrative officers employed in MARnet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of equal opportunities for employment and promotion,</li> <li>• Equal access to information and documentation and resources,</li> <li>• Proactive communication on gender quality</li> <li>• Prohibitions on discrimination or harassment</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness among employees about gender equality</li> <li>• Good working conditions and improved quality of tasks performed</li> </ul> |