

CALL FOR PAPERS

Voicing young researchers for the future of Europe: Trends, challenges and policies

**First Annual Conference
of the COST ACTION CA20137**

Making Young Researchers' Voices Heard for Gender Equality (VOICES)

14-15 February 2023

University of Malta, Valletta Campus

Several studies flag the role played by young researchers in advancing research innovation and knowledge development and bringing fresh perspectives to research (Chen et al., 2015¹; Cantwell, 2011²; Musselin, 2004³; Åkerlind, 2005⁴). Young researchers also greatly contribute to the enrichment of academic life and culture, through innovative teaching, creating associations and networks – and therefore to research excellence overall. They also represent a growing pool of professionals in Europe; yet only slightly over half of those in the academic sector are employed on permanent contracts, compared to the vast majority of those in other sectors (European Science Foundation, 2017, p.11⁵). Moreover, their working conditions have become increasingly unstable as they are particularly affected by the growing casualisation of the academic workforce and precariousness of the academic life (Murgia & Porgio, 2019). They face, among other things, insecure employment conditions (short-term contracts, part-time), low remunerations, long working hours, increasing requirements (mainly mobility), intense academic competition, overwhelming administrative and organisational tasks, and a lack of recognition by research organisations.

Many of these work experiences are profoundly gendered, with intersectional dynamics at play (European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, 2021⁶). Gender equality has been on the European political agenda for research and innovation over the last decades, and many EU-funded projects focus on gender mainstreaming in research institutions through the implementation of Gender Equality Plans. These include LeTSGEPs (2020-2023), GEARING ROLES (2019-2022),

¹ Chen, S., McAlpine, L., & Amundsen, C. (2015). Postdoctoral positions as preparation for desired careers: a narrative approach to understanding postdoctoral experience. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(6), 1083-1096.

² Cantwell, B. (2011). Transnational mobility and international academic employment: Gatekeeping in an academic competition arena. *Minerva*, 49(4), 425-445.

³ Musselin, C. (2004). Towards a European academic labour market? Some lessons drawn from empirical studies on academic mobility. *Higher Education*, 48(1), 55-78.

⁴ Åkerlind, G. S. (2005). Academic growth and development-How do university academics experience it? *Higher education*, 50(1), 1-32.

⁵ European Science Foundation (2017). 2017 Career Tracking Survey of Doctorate Holders: Project Report. Strasbourg. https://www.esf.org/fileadmin/user_upload/esf/FFINALCareer_Tracking_Survey_2017_Project_Report.pdf

⁶ European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (2021). *She figures 2021: gender in research and innovation : statistics and indicators*. Brussels: Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/06090>

SPEAR (2019-2022), GENDERACTION (2017-2021), EQUAL-IST (2016-2019), ACT (2018-2021). Several certification and award schemes already exist in Europe (Athena Swan Award, Label égalité, etc.); while the CASPER project (2020-2022) examines the feasibility of establishing a European certification system for gender equality for Research Performing Organizations (RPOs).

VOICES

Drawing on such good practices, the **COST ACTION CA20137 [Making Young Researchers' Voices Heard for Gender Equality \(VOICES\)](#)** is tasked with increasing the visibility of inequalities faced by young researchers, with emphasis on a gender perspective; and promoting a sustainable dialogue between young researchers and stakeholders in the research ecosystem at the systemic level (European & national policymakers) and at the institutional level (senior researchers, academic managers) by creating a community of gender equality practitioners composed of various stakeholders (young researchers, independent researchers, academic managers, organisations) across Europe. The Action has among its outcomes: training schools for young researchers, scientific publications by young researchers, recommendations and guidelines for academics and policymakers.

Now in its second year, VOICES features four active, proactive, responsive and organically developing working groups, namely:

[Working Group 1: Employment, Career Development and Mobilities](#)

[Working Group 2: Leadership and Decision-Making](#)

[Working Group 3: Gender as a Research Dimension](#)

[Working Group 4: Sexual Harassment, Gender-based Violence and Institutional Culture](#)

[Working Group 5: Intersectionality](#)

[Working Group 6: Monitoring and Evaluation.](#)

CALL FOR PAPERS

In the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality, and in the context of the International Year for Basic Science and Sustainable Development 2022 #IYBSSD2022, under the auspices of Organisation of Basic Science for Sustainable Development and of the European Platform of Women Scientists, the COST VOICES network will draw on intersectionality perspectives, in hosting an authentic and inclusive space to discuss:

- Trends, challenges and policies impacting young researchers and their futures;
- Methodologies, collection, analysis and evaluation of data concerning young researchers and their participation in the scientific communities;
- Terminologies, classifications, categorisations, indicators etc.;
- Ethical issues, privacy and legal issues.

Thematic areas that conference sessions with specifically and critically engage with will include:

- Precarity in academia: intersectional perspectives
- Early career researchers' voices in universities and research performing institutions
- Discrimination and gender-based violence in higher education
- Female and minority researchers and faculty: (In)Visibility in data and untold stories
- Female and minority researchers and faculty in Basic Sciences

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts are invited from researchers and stakeholders to present works-in-progress or published papers, posters or other audio-visual presentations that stimulate discussion and debate and help discern and gauge trends, challenges and policies impacting young researchers, their futures; and related intersections with the present and the future of research and innovation. Interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches and perspectives are strongly encouraged.

The VOICES network will consider papers accepted for this conference for open access publication in one of the forthcoming scientific publications of this Action.

Abstracts of **200 words need to include**, with **3-4 keywords** and details of the author/s that specify **affiliation, engagement/employment status** in this affiliation and **designation**.

Kindly use the form provided here to submit your abstract:

<https://forms.gle/5F6xB44x5A1LgYwF8>

Only submissions made through this form will be considered for selection.

Criteria for selection include:

- (1) Interdisciplinarity & intersectional approach
- (2) In line with the topic of the conference
- (3) Contribution towards policy

The scientific committee is tasked with selecting abstracts that show evidence of excellence whilst securing participation of researchers at diverse stages of their careers, with attention to the inclusion of young researchers, [COST intensive target countries](#), and researchers with minority and intersectional backgrounds.

A limited number of participants' travel and subsistence expenses can be funded through COST, subject to COST Regulations applicable at the time.

Kindly specify in the submission form if COST funding is required.

A limited number of self-funded presenters are also welcomed to participate.

No registration fees are applicable.

KEY DATES

- Final date to submit abstracts: **10 December 2022**
- Communication of decision on abstract submission: **15 December 2022**
- Conference dates: **14-15 February 2023**

All queries should be addressed to: conference2023@gendervoices.eu

CONVENORS

Prof Anne-Sophie Godfroy, Ecole Normale Supérieure, CNRS & Collège de France - PSL, VOICES Action Chair, President of the Scientific Committee

Dr Maria Brown, University of Malta; Leader, Working Group 6 Monitoring and Evaluation, Local Organiser, President of the Organising Committee

This Call For Papers is based upon work from „Making Early Career Investigators' Voices Heard for Gender Equality” (VOICES) CA20137, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career and innovation.

