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## Gender Equality Plan [University of Ruse Angel Kanchev]

**Project Acronym:** ATHENA

**Title:** Implementing gender equality plans to unlock research potential of RPOs and RFOs in Europe

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		Reviewer	Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. Pavlov

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<sup>1</sup> PU= Public, CO=Confidential, only for members of the Consortium (including the Commission Services), CL=Classified, as referred in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>GEP</b>	Gender Equality Plan
<b>URAK</b>	University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”



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## 1. Introduction

The Gender Equality Plan at University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev" was developed as a result of the ATHENA Project (101006416-ATHENA-H2020-SwafS-2018-2020/H2020 - SwafS - 2020 - 1).

The plan complies with the normative acts of national law - the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Law on Protection against Discrimination, the Law on Equality between Women and Men (Official Gazette No. 33 of 26.04.2016), as well as with the acts of European Union law (gender equality is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right and a fundamental principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights)<sup>2</sup> and with international treaties to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party.<sup>3</sup>

The plan was developed in accordance with the National Strategy for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men 2021-2030, adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 969 of 30 December 2020 and the National Action Plan for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men for the period 2021-2022, taking into account the specifics of the activity of RU "Angel Kanchev" as a higher school within the meaning of the Law on Higher Education. The guidelines of the European Institute for Gender Equality for the development and implementation of plans for equality between women and men are also taken into account.<sup>4</sup> The external expert of the GEP was Prof. Dr. Sasho Penov, who was later on appointed as the Minister of education of Bulgaria.

## 2. Development process and GEP management

Priority areas:

- equality of women and men in access to educational services, in obtaining scientific degrees, in holding academic positions and in concluding labor and civil contracts at Ruse University "Angel Kanchev" (URAK).
- non-admission of gender differences in the payment of remuneration, additional material incentives and scholarships.
- promoting the equality of women and men in the decision-making processes in the management bodies of Ruse University "Angel Kanchev" (General Assembly, Academic Council, Rector, Student Council), as well as in the management bodies of

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<sup>2</sup> See Art. 2 and Art. 3, paragraph 3 of the TEU, Art. 8, 10, 19 and 157 of the TFEU and Art. 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU; The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (COM/2020/152 final); European Pillar of Social Rights.

<sup>3</sup> The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (<https://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about>), the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, the European Pillar of Social Rights, etc.

<sup>4</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/step-step-guide>.



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the main units (faculties, branches, departments) and service units (administrative directorates and departments) combating violence and protecting and supporting victims;

- overcoming gender stereotypes in various spheres of public life and sexism (measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment).

## 3. Diagnosis

In order to achieve the goals of the plan in the priority areas, measures have been developed to achieve specific results, with deadlines and University bodies responsible for the implementation of the measures, as well as indicators of results and impact.

After the in-principle acceptance of the main document by the AC of the University of Ruse, it will be supplemented with an impact matrix and a calendar of events harmonizing with Areas 1-5 until the end of the Project ATHENA program period.

## 4. Objectives

The main objectives of the plan are:

- through amendments and additions to the internal acts of the University and implementation of various activities to create a permanent normative and institutional environment that will contribute to the de facto equality of women and men (students, doctoral students, administrative staff and academic staff) in the University.
- to ensure the implementation of a uniform policy of equality between women and men in all activities carried out by the University.
- to ensure permanent prevention against direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of gender, as well as on the basis of other discriminatory characteristics such as race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, origin, religion or belief, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, age, marital status, property status or any other characteristics established by law or in an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party.

## 5. Actions

This is the main section of the GEP, which is devoted to designing an action plan to promote GE. This section should address the following:

- Description of actions to be undertaken under each specific objective.
- Actions should be structured around the five thematic areas recommended by the EC.
- Include a table of specific objectives and actions in line with the ATHENA table template below.

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Action No.	Content area	Issue to be addressed/evidence (specific objective)	Action	Start/end date	Responsibility	Impact assessment	Success stories	Problems encountered during implementation	Strategies to solve the problem
1	<b>Work-life balance and organizational culture</b>	1. Annual information on existing state of the ratio between men and women in the process of studying students and doctoral students, in obtaining scientific degrees, in occupying academic positions and positions in the University administration.	Get current information about the ratio between men and women in teaching, research and administrative activities.	Term: permanent.	Academic Staff Development.	Reflecting on the state in the Rector's annual report on the activities of the University to the General Assembly.	Publicity of information.	Acceptance of the proposed changes by different boards at URAK.	<b>General Strategy for Area No. 1.</b>  Ensuring conditions for equality of women and men through access to educational services, when obtaining scientific degrees, when occupying academic positions and when concluding labor and civil contracts in the University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev" and an equal degree of economic independence.
		2. Preparation of a project for an addition to the Regulations for the activities of the University, including provisions for the non-admission of discrimination against based on gender and other discriminatory characteristics established in a law or in an international treaty by which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party in carrying out the activities of the University. Accepting of the suggestions of General Assembly.	Creating lasting internal regulatory framework guaranteeing equality between women and men.	Deadline: first upcoming General Assembly of the University.	Head of Education Sector.	Amended Regulations for activity of the university, determination of rights and obligations in connection with the guarantee of the equality between women and men and prevention other forms of discrimination.	Publicity, introduction and application of The regulations for activity of the university.	Lack of interest, lack of awareness on the published document, limited implemented actions which will be recommended in the documents.	



	<p>3. Preparation of project proposals for amendments and additions to other internal acts of the University, adopted by the Academic Council with regulations regarding equality between women and men and their approval by the Academic Council.</p>	<p>Creating lasting internal regulatory base guaranteeing equality between women and men.</p>	<p>Term: 1. 08. 22 - 30.10. 2022.</p>	<p>Dean of the Faculty of Law. Chairman of the Board of Directors.</p>	<p>Updated internal acts of the University including regulations to prevent discrimination Altered Ethical code of teachers and the employees of URAK.</p>	<p>Publicity. Accessibility of the acts of the inside page of the university.</p>	<p>Acceptance of the proposed changes by different boards at URAK.</p>	
	<p>4. Preparation of suggestions for amendment and complement of the Code of Ethics of the teachers and the employees of the University of regulations regarding ensuring equality between women and men in university activities and delegation of powers to Ethics committees in the university in this area. Accepting of the proposals.</p>	<p>Reflecting on the general university policies for equality between women and men. Reflecting the basic ethical requirements in the behavior of students, PhD students, academic staff, administrative and service staff, to ensure equality between women and men.</p>	<p>Term: 1.08.22 - 30.10.22</p>	<p>Secretary General</p>	<p>Conducted training.</p>	<p>Publicity. Accessibility of The Code of Ethics of the inside page of the university.</p>	<p>Lack of skills to develop such system.</p>	
	<p>5. Training of the members of the Ethics Committees on topics related to guaranteeing the equality between women and men.</p>	<p>Providing expert capacity on the questions about ensuring equality between men and women.</p>	<p>Deadline: 1.10.2022</p>	<p>Chairman of the Commission on academic ethics at the Academic Council.</p>	<p>Number of participants.</p>	<p>Application of the results of the training in activity of the committees. Disclosure of the rules and their practical application.</p>	<p>Time constrains, lack of interest from employees.</p>	



	6. Upgrading the system for the adaptation of young specialists when occupying an academic position and starting a job at the University, through the "Young Teacher" School reflected in the Internal Rules.	Supporting the overall development and improvement of the professional skills of young specialists according to the specifics of teaching, research and administrative activities.	Deadline: 31.12. 2022.	Chairman of the Commission on academic ethics at the Academic Council.	Adoption of internal rules for the adaptation of young specialists when occupying an academic position and starting a job at the University based on the current acts of the URAK.	Written information on the University website.	Not identified.	
	7. Ensuring a better reconciliation of the professional and personal life of parents with young children and large families.	The activity is aimed at ensuring a better reconciliation of the professional and personal life of parents with small children and large families.	Term: annually during the period  1.01.- 31.03.	Vice Rector Career Development and Continuing Education.	Provision of information to parents with small children and large families regarding the possibilities for their stimulation according to national legislation.	Number of supported parents with small children and large families.	Not identified.	
	8. Ensuring equal access when hiring women and men with permanent disabilities usual working and specialized work environment under the National Program for Employment of People with Disabilities, according to Art. 46 and Art. 49 of the Soviet Union and of equal access to their education.	Creating conditions for hiring, employment, education, and/or promotion of employability to people with permanent disabilities.	Term: permanent.	Head of the Academic Staff Development.  Assistant Rector.	Building a work environment - access to workplace and administrative service, adaptation of the work environment for people with permanent physical disabilities.	Number of annually trained and employed women and men with permanent disabilities.	Not identified.	





	9. Provision of opportunities for different forms of employment - hourly, in person, remote environment.	Achievement of balance between professional and personal life at the exercise of the rights and obligations of students, the doctoral students, the academic staff and the administrative staff.	Term: permanent.	Assistant Rector.	Advance and timely notification of applicable forms of employment.	Annual investment for working environment.	Not identified.	
	10. Provision for academic and administrative staff of a conducive environment, about finding a balance between personal life and professional growth.	Achievement of balance between professional and personal life.	Term: permanent.	Rector's Guide. Branch Managers and faculties.	Realization of specializations, participation in research forums and other scientific events, financed if funds are available at URAK under national and international programs.	Publicity of the information of the inside page of the university.	Not identified.	
	11. Provision of a system for informing the university management about the state of equality between men and women in the University.	Maintaining awareness of the University's leadership on the implementation of the equality plan in order to adopt impact measures.	Term: permanent.	Chairman of the University Ethics Committee.  Rector's Guide. Academic Council.	Provision of annual information to the Rector's management on the implementation of the plan for equality between women and men.	Annual reference to the report of the main units and the report of the Rector's management on the activities of the university. Implementation of the equality plan.	Weak collaboration between different units collecting data.	



2	<b>Gender balance in leadership and decision-making</b>	1. Review and Amendment Proposals and complement of the Internal acts of University related to labor remuneration, the additional material incentive and the scholarships. Non-admission of differences based on gender upon receipt of remuneration from the University and the provision of scholarships.	Non-admission of differences based on gender upon receipt of remuneration from the University and the provision of scholarships.	Deadline: upon subsequent resigning of the Collective Labor Agreement.	Rector. Chairman of Trade Union organizations.	Updated internal acts of the University.	Publicity of the information on the internal page of the University and in the archive with the decisions of the Academic Council.	Not identified.	<b>General Strategy for Area No. 2.</b>  Non-admission of gender differences in the payment of remuneration, additional material incentives and scholarships.
		2. Approval of the Collective Labor Agreement as an instrument for equal pay for women and men. Ensuring equality between women and men in receiving remuneration and other payments.	Ensuring equality between women and men in receiving remuneration and other payments.	Deadline: annually until 31.03.	Assistant Rector, Chief Accountant.	The inclusion of an express clause in the Collective Labor Agreement, not allowing inequality between women and men in the payment of remuneration.	Publicity of the information on the internal page of the university and in the archive with the decisions of the Academic Council.	Not identified.	
		3. Awareness of the academic staff and administrative staff regarding the level of pay for women and men for the University's activities. Publicity of the regulatory framework.	Publicity of the regulatory framework.	Term: permanent.	Rector's Guide. Branch Managers and Faculties.	Written information available.	Information on the number of women and men involved in decision-making to the annual documents for reporting the activities of the University.	Not identified.	



3	<b>Gender equality in recruitment and career progression</b>	1. Guaranteeing equal opportunities for the participation of women and men in decision-making processes in the structures of the University.	Application of the principles of equality between women and men in decision-making.	Term: permanent.	Rector's Guide.  Branch Managers and faculties.	Number of women and men involved in decision-making.	Information on the number of women and men involved in decision-making to the annual reports for reporting the activities of the University.	Not identified.	<b>General Strategy for Area No. 3.</b>  Observing and promoting the equality of women and men in decision-making processes in the management bodies of RUAK (General Assembly, Academic Council, Rector, Student Council), as well as in the management bodies of the main units (Faculties, Branches, Departments) and service units (Administrative Directorates and Departments).
		2. Publicly announced and transparent criteria for election to governing bodies have been established, in compliance with the principle of equality between women and men.	Publicity of the regulatory framework.	Term: permanent.	Secretary General  Chairman of the Central Commission for Election Preparation.	Provisions in the Regulations and other internal acts of the University guaranteeing equality between women and men.	Publicity of the information on the internal page of the University and in the archive with the decisions of the Academic Council.	Not identified.	
4	<b>Integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching content</b>	1. Prevention against violence, as violation of human rights and form of discrimination gender based.	Provision of public information about the regulations regarding prohibitions on discrimination in fulfillment of Art. 22 and Art. 30 Protection from	Term: permanent.	President of the Student Council.  Chairmen of trade union organizations.	A separate section on the University's website containing the main normative acts prohibiting discrimination.	Publicity of the information on the internal page of the university and in the archive with the decisions of the Academic Council.	Time constrains, lack of interest.	<b>General Strategy for Area No. 4.</b>  Combating violence and protecting and supporting victims.



			Discrimination Act.						
		2. Meetings and public lectures with representatives of the Commission on Discrimination or the Judiciary on the issues of the prohibition of discrimination and the non-admission of violence.	Awareness of the academic staff and administrative staff.	Term: annually	Assistant Rector.  Chairmen of the Student Council and trade union organizations.	Number of meetings held and participants.	Number of participants. Publicity of Disclosure of Meetings.	Time constrains, lack of interest.	
		3. Organization of a scientific conference at the University (Faculty of Law) on the issues of prohibition of discrimination and measures to combat violence.	Awareness of the academic staff and administrative staff.	Term: 1.01.23 - 31.12.23	Deputy rector for scientific research. Dean of the Faculty of Law.	Number of participants.	Publication of scientific results in a collective monograph	Not identified.	
		4. Taking effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination in the workplace and at school by persons from the teaching or non-teaching staff or by students.	Guarantee of protection of the rights of persons in fulfillment of Art.17, Art. 29, para. 2 and Art. 31 of the Anti-Discrimination Act.	Deadline: 30.10.22.	Chairman of the Ethics Committee General Secretary.  Dean of the Faculty of Law.  Chairmen of the Student Council and trade union organizations.	Procedures developed in internal acts and normative documents of the University.	Publicity of the procedures.	Limited possibilities to implement certain actions based on the data.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual</b>	1. Promotion of measures for effective implementation of the policy on equality between women and men.	Implementation of a procedure for obtaining a Distinctive Badge for significant achievements in the effective implementation of the policy on	Deadline: 1.01. 24 - 31.12.24.	Vice Rector Research.  Assistant Rector.  Presidents of the Student Council and Trade Union	Preparation of documentation for participation in the procedure.	Publicity of the procedure and its results.	Limited possibilities to implement certain actions based on the data.	<b>General Strategy for Area No. 5.</b>  Overcoming gender stereotypes in various spheres of public life and sexism. Measures



<b>harassment</b>		equality between women and men.		organizations.				against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.
	2. Implementation of an information policy in the University system to raise the awareness of students, academic staff and administrative staff regarding the principle of equality between women and men.	Application of the principle of equality between men and women.  Awareness of equal opportunities for men and women.	Term: permanent.	Rector. Assistant Rector.  Presidents of the Student Council and Trade Union organizations.  Public Relations and Advertising Department.	Application of the principle of equality of women and men when publishing informational materials on the University's website and when conducting public events.	Positizing trends in behavioral, social and visual models in the University regarding the equality of women and men.	Limited interest from the management of the institutions/ centers.	
	3. Providing a link to the rubric "Equal opportunities" maintained by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.	Promotion of the national policy on equality between women and men in national and international events.	Term: permanent.	Public Relations and Advertising Department.	Application of the principle of equality.	Link on the University website.	Limited interest from the management of the institutions/centres.	
	4. Organization of meetings - talks between students, academic staff and the representatives of the central and local authorities (coordinators for equality between women and men).	Combating discriminatory practices, familiarization with various practical hypotheses.	Term: annually.	Rector. Vice rectors.  Assistant Rector.  Chairmen of the Student Council and Trade Union organizations.	Raising the awareness of the University staff, by making them aware of the rights of individuals and which institutions to turn to for assistance.	Number of meetings held.	Time-constrains, lack of awareness of the policy.	
	5. Organizing the presentation of information on the benefits to society and the economy of equality between women and men by representatives of the central or local	Awareness of the need to guarantee equal opportunities between women and men and its benefits for society.	Term: once every two years.	Public Relations and Advertising Department.	Raising the awareness of University staff about the social importance of equality between women and men.	Number of events held on the social and economic benefits of equality between women and men, and measures against gender-based	Not identified.	



		government.					violence, including sexual harassment.		
		6. Holding talks with representatives of the central and local authorities to raise awareness of the new challenges that have an impact on the equality of women and men - new technologies, digital industries, artificial intelligence, transition to a green and digital economy, the need for new skills and new jobs, climate change, migration, threats to public health such as pandemics, possible conflicts disrupting peace and security, etc.	Raising the awareness of the academic, administrative and student staff about the importance of equality between women and men in the face of new societal challenges.	Deadline: 2023.	Public Relations and Advertising Department.  Rector's Guide.  Administrative guidance.  Student Council.  Trade Union organizations.	Raising the awareness of the academic, administrative and student staff of the University about the social significance of equality between women and men.	Number of events held and participants.	Time-constrains, lack of awareness of the policy.	



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## 6. GEP monitoring, reporting and assessment

- Some of the described actions in the GEP of URAK include periodical monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the GEP. On annual base such reports will be produced as part of the sector under the umbrella of the Vice-rector in research.
- The monitoring methodology carried out for GEP evaluation and impact is based on the indicators in column “Impact assessment” in the previous section 5. Some of the indicators are periodical, while others a permanent. The responsible person for the implementation of this methodology and periodical monitoring, reporting and assessment is the Vice-rector in research.
- The GEP of URAK will be active four years. The periodical reports will facilitate the Academic Council of URAK to collect enough data during the first four years and prepare some improvements for the second four years.

## 7. Dissemination strategy of the GEP

- The GEP of URAK is published on the institution’s website. It has been approved by the Academic Council and disseminated by internal and external stakeholders.
- Every year URAK will organize workshops to keep the awareness for the GEP by trainings which to address the topics of unconscious bias and/or other specific topics.
- Thanks to these workshops the GEP will reach the whole institutional community.
- Thanks to the collaboration with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education the GEP of URAK will be disseminated to other Bulgarian universities and research organizations.

## 8. Annex

- Picture from 10 June 2022 when the GEP of URAK has been presented to the Bulgarian Minister of education and regional stakeholders.

