EDITORIAL

Gender Equality Plans in European Research Performing Organisations

Katalin Tardos [1,2] , **Veronika Paksi** [1,3] , **Judit Takács** [1] , and **Rita Bencivenga** [4]

[1] Institute for Sociology, ELTE Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary
[2] International Business School, Hungary
[3] University of Szeged, Hungary
[4] University of Genoa, Italy

Correspondence: Katalin Tardos (tardos.katalin@tk.hu)

Abstract

This thematic issue explores diverse perspectives on the experiences of European research performing organisations (RPOs) and their stakeholders in designing, implementing, and evaluating Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in practice. The 16 articles included apply a wide range of methodologies, from single organisation case studies to international comparative qualitative and quantitative analyses. To address the complexities of whether and how GEPs can achieve their intended gender equality outcomes, the contributions primarily draw on feminist institutionalism, complexity theory, and intersectionality theory. While the call for papers aimed to highlight good practices to be shared in the European Research Area, most articles instead bring to the fore the challenges and organisational resistance of putting inclusive and intersectional GEPs into practice. From a content perspective, the articles can be broadly grouped into four categories: (a) comparative studies focusing on the process of implementing GEPs, (b) studies examining specific dimensions of GEPs, as gender-based violence, work–life balance, gender equality in teaching and research, etc., (c) analyses of policy discourses and their real-life implementation, and finally, (d) holistic case-studies of individual organisations. This thematic issue is special in that it is among the first such collections examining GEPs in European RPOs, in particular with a high representation of articles addressing experiences with GEPs in the Central and Eastern European region.

Keywords

---

1. Introduction

Despite the European Commission's strong recommendations and financial support, progress towards gender equality (GE) in the European Research Area (ERA) has been slower than anticipated. The European Commission has funded numerous initiatives under FP6, FP7, and Horizon 2020 programmes to promote GE through Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), yielding valuable outcomes and expertise. A key lesson is that advancing GE requires institutional change (Clavero & Galligan, 2021), underpinned by strong commitment from senior leadership (Carvalho et al., 2013; Lipinsky & Wroblewski, 2021; Tardos & Paksi, 2024). Such change is fundamental to dismantling gender stereotypes, ensuring fair evaluations, reducing vertical segregation, preventing gender-based violence (GBV), building institutional capacity, integrating gender into research and teaching, and introducing gender budgeting.

Nevertheless, by 2020, more than half of higher education institutions in EU member states and "associated countries" had taken action (European Commission, 2021). Under its Gender Equality Strategy (2020–2025), the European Commission made GEPs a requirement for participation in Horizon Europe programmes. GEPs must address recruitment, career progression, leadership balance, organisational culture, work–life balance, GBV, and the gender dimension in teaching and research. They must also be public documents, allocate resources, draw on sex-disaggregated data, include training and monitoring, and increasingly incorporate intersectional perspectives.

While institutions with established GE policies are now adopting advanced GEPs or diversity plans, many—especially in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)—are developing GEPs for the first time. Here, traditional norms, weak policy support, and anti-gender movements can pose significant challenges (Kuhar & Paternotte, 2017). Even in Western Europe, gaps persist between GEP policy and practice, with organisational resistance often undermining structural change (Tildesley et al., 2022). Such barriers are especially acute in highly gendered environments, including STEM fields (O'Connor & White, 2021).

This thematic issue seeks to examine the effectiveness of GEPs, assess the content of recent plans, and share experiences of their design and implementation. By doing so, it aims to advance strategies for GE, diversity, and inclusion within research performing organisations (RPOs) and identify practical entry points for stakeholders. From the large number of high-quality submissions received by *Social Inclusion*, a total of sixteen manuscripts were accepted. The published studies share several key features: They focus on GEPs and gender inclusion or exclusion within RPOs, mainly universities. Research spans the EU27 member states, with valuable contributions from several "associated countries." Some articles examine a single organisation as a case study (in Slovenia, Italy, Norway, and Turkey), others several RPOs within one country (in Spain, Belgium, Norway, and Slovakia); six adopt a comparative international perspective, ranging from three countries to an analysis of the EU27 (Campanini Vilhena et al., 2025; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Pedersen, 2025; Karatas et al., 2025; Paksi et al., 2025; Vilarchao et al., 2025; Wroblewski & Grasenick, 2025).

2. Contributions

The articles in this thematic issue significantly contribute to the different academic discourses on gender inequality and GEPs, offering numerous practical recommendations and policy implications. Most studies examined various dimensions of GE in GEPs, focusing rather on the GEP implementation process itself.

Based on a large-scale comprehensive research, Karatas et al. (2025) highlighted that the approaches of diversity and inclusion are more widespread in the European landscape than intersectionality, and gender is mainly understood in GEPs as a binary division between women and men. Based on a wide-scale international sample, Wroblewski and Grasenick (2025) explored how gender-competent management and gender expertise can fruitfully interact, enhancing GEP implementation and overcoming institutional tensions. Kalpazidou Schmidt and Pedersen (2025) interpreted the GEP-related challenges of nine universities, sharing valuable insights about how structural and cultural change can be effectively fostered by university alliances.

Lagesen et al. (2025) revealed fundamental tension in contemporary diversity governance in Norwegian universities and called for a more productive balance between institutional guidance and local agency. Musubika and Lotherington (2025), also in the Norwegian context, found that instead of diversity, mainly women and their underrepresentation in senior/leadership roles are problematised in the GEP, distracting from more nuanced problems of gender representations. Campanini Vilhena et al. (2025) shared experiences gained through a wide-scale research, revealing how the lack of clarity around the meaning and conceptualisation of institutional change contributed to the uneven and slow progress toward GE. Analysing the database of the Catalan Government, Arroyo and Berga (2025) underline the role of an inter-university council in catalysing GE in Catalan universities.

Concerning the five mandatory dimensions of GEPs, single-focused studies, such as Švab et al. (2025), researched work–life balance in Slovenia, showing the gap between the formally inclusive policies and career advancement shaped differently by informal rules. Three articles focused on the issue of GBV: Vilarchao et al. (2025) explored resistances in eight CEE sport universities, particularly toward measures against GBV. Avery et al. (2025) highlight that organisational procedures in Flemish universities ignore the intersectional experiences regarding sexually transgressive behaviours. Kuhar et al. (2025) use the theoretical framework of feminist institutionalism to show how a bridge can be built between top-down expectations, such as those from the European Commission, and bottom-up initiatives at the University of Ljubljana. Beyond other GEP dimensions, they put emphasis on GBV and the application of the 7P model (Mergaert et al., 2023), and also on the institutionalisation and sustainability of the GEP. Finally, Mas de Les Valls et al. (2025) contributed to the least addressed and understood GEP dimension, the integration of the gender dimension in teaching and research, by analysing the experiences of GE training educators in Catalan STEM universities.

We received several studies sharing experiences about GEP implementations in CEE and STEM contexts. Beyond the above-mentioned CEE-focused studies, the impact of broader political contexts on GEP implementation also became particularly visible in Paksi et al.'s (2025) research, which explored GE barriers in Czech, Hungarian, and Slovenian universities in eight GEP dimensions, with particular attention to sectoral specificities in the field of agriculture and life sciences. The less supportive local context in STEM fields also hinders progress toward GE in Slovak universities, as explored by Šebová et al. (2025). Leone et al. (2025) present the unique and voluntary progress of the non-academic Italian Institute of Technology regarding their GEP. Last, but definitely not least, Yılmaz and Adak's (2025) study is also a unique contribution by evaluating the Turkish Akdeniz University's first GEP, calling attention to the role of both national and transnational dynamics in shaping GE processes of provincial universities.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

The articles of our thematic issue embed their investigations into different mainstream theoretical frameworks relevant to research in GEP-related gender issues. One of the main approaches is feminist institutionalism (Mackay et al., 2010), which builds on both the theory of new institutionalism (March & Olsen, 1983) and the theory of gendered organisations by Acker (1992). Feminist institutionalism interprets organisational processes through the gender lens and underlines the role of both formal and informal institutional rules in organisational changes. It puts a strong emphasis on informal processes, which can undermine even formal ones, enabling us to understand why organisations resist change, which is a fruitful approach given that the main goal of GEPs is to achieve strategic change (Clavero & Galligan, 2021).

Another often considered theoretical framework is intersectionality, and not by chance. The European Commission strongly recommends and expects to apply a gender+ equality perspective in policy making, recognising that "other axes of inequality always intersect gender" (Lombardo et al., 2017, p. 2). The intersectionality framework was fruitful in exploring multiple sources of disadvantage, highlighting multiple forms of discrimination and oppression whose combined effect further exacerbates the disadvantageous situation of gender minorities. At the same time, Karatas et al. (2025) proved the considerable lack of the intersectionality approach in GEPs in the whole ERA, while Avery et al. (2025) explored the gap between how intersectionality is aspired in policy commitments regarding sexually transgressive behaviour and discrimination, and how it fails to be operationalised in policy documents of Flemish universities.

Resistance, as a theoretical framework or focus of research, was also applied to understand why the progress of GE is so slow in organisations (Lagesen et al., 2025; Vilarchao et al., 2025). Some studies (Campanini Vilhena et al., 2025; Kalpazidou Schmidt & Pedersen, 2025) drew on complexity theory (Byrne & Callaghan, 2022) to highlight how institutional change is shaped by complex, non-linear, and unpredictable processes.

The infiltration of the neoliberal agenda into higher education has clearly positioned the embeddedness of some of the studies received (Musubika & Lotherington, 2025; Paksi et al., 2025; Švab et al., 2025) within the framework of the "neoliberal academia" (Rosa, 2022), interpreting the slow improvement or stagnation of GE as a result of processes arising from prioritizing market principles and managerialism, as well as profitability over traditional teaching and research work or academic freedom.

4. Methodological Insights

Important methodological insights emerge from this thematic issue, depicting how European researchers are experimenting with ways to study GEPs as both policy documents and institutional practices. Several studies used participant observation, autoethnography, and critical–friend approaches (Campanini Vilhena et al., 2025; Kuhar et al., 2025; Wroblewski & Grasenick, 2025), demonstrating that researchers are not necessarily external neutral observers but often insiders and co-creators of institutional change. For example, when authors position themselves as "feminist critical friends," they apply a research approach to study institutional change in academic settings that contributes to feminist institutionalism-informed research with ethical and methodological reflections (see also Campanini Vilhena, 2024). In this context, reflexivity becomes a data source—as documented in fieldnotes—that can highlight previously ignored aspects, such as informal

practices and the emotional labour of change. As illustrated by these examples, interpreting researcher positionality as part of our methodological toolkit can also contribute to institutional change research.

Several authors applied participatory and interactive action research designs, integrating knowledge production with capacity building (Mas de Les Valls et al., 2025; Vilarchao et al., 2025). When research becomes part of an intervention, it can produce more situated and context-specific results; at the same time, it can raise questions about generalisability. A great advantage of these approaches is that their findings can provide feedback directly into practice.

Studies relying on critical policy and discourse analyses broadened the understanding of "policy" to include various forms of organisational documents, web pages, and institutional narratives (Avery et al., 2025; Musubika & Lotherington, 2025), sometimes combined with qualitative interview material (Lagesen et al., 2025). The findings revealed how formal commitments to equality can be undermined by informal institutional routines and power structures and highlighted that analysing GEPs requires moving beyond formal plans to their discursive ecosystems.

Cross-national and sector-specific case studies showed that national context, sectoral traditions, and organisational culture can shape GEP implementation as much as institutional design (Kalpazidou Schmidt & Pedersen, 2025; Paksi et al., 2025; Šebová et al., 2025; Vilarchao et al., 2025; Yılmaz & Adak, 2025). Authors using quantitative survey and indicator-based approaches (Arroyo & Berga, 2025; Karatas et al., 2025; Leone et al., 2025; Švab et al., 2025) attempted to generate comparability and benchmarking, while also noting the limitations that these metrics can fail to detect intersectionality, structural inequalities, and informal practices.

The applied methodologies in our thematic issue can illustrate that European scholars tend to move away from interpreting GEPs simply as static compliance tools and instead are increasingly treating them as evolving—sometimes contested—co-produced practices.

5. Policy Implications

Analysing the articles included in this thematic issue reveals a rich and diverse landscape of policy insights on GE in higher education and research. Some recurring themes emerge as particularly relevant: the political and strategic implications of introducing GEPs, the transformation of internal practices within universities, the opportunities and challenges associated with their implementation, follow-up measures to increase their effectiveness, the interaction between European policy frameworks and national or local regulations, and the potential for scaling up and replicating successful approaches in other contexts. For obvious space reasons, it was not possible to analyse all these dimensions in depth. We therefore focus on the more proactive and generative aspects that can serve as inspiration for institutions and working groups committed to meaningful and sustainable institutional change.

Putting policy into practice requires targeted follow-up measures. Operationalising intersectionality is crucial and goes beyond mere recognition in documents to influence procedures, training, and access to services for multiple minoritised groups. Strategic planning and clear communication will help institutions—especially those that are still in the early stages or in a resistant environment—navigate the challenges and effectively

engage stakeholders. Strengthening leadership and expertise, institutionalising gender competence, and fostering collaboration with gender specialists are critical to managing change. Systematic monitoring and reflective evaluation will ensure that interventions lead to tangible improvements, while targeted training and support for educators, particularly in curriculum redesign and GBV prevention, will address key barriers. Adequate allocation of financial and human resources, and the creation of safe spaces for dialogue, will increase the effectiveness of GEP and go beyond symbolic gestures to real institutional change.

The thematic issue is particularly topical in view of the upcoming political developments in Europe. The recent proposal for a Council Recommendation on the policy agenda for the ERA 2025–2027 confirms that the EU will continue to pursue a structural policy aimed at promoting GE, equal opportunities, and inclusion. In particular, it emphasises the strengthening of inclusive and intersectional GE within the ERA, signalling a sustained institutional commitment to promoting systemic change in the research and higher education environment.

Complementing this, the proposal for a Council Decision on the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe (2028–2034) sets out concrete measures to achieve these objectives. By ensuring diverse representation on the Scientific Council of the European Research Council, the proposal enshrines the principles of inclusion and equity in the governance of European research. In addition, collaborative research activities under the "Competitiveness and Society" agenda explicitly address societal challenges by promoting democratic values, civic engagement, and pluralistic, resilient societies, while countering discrimination, disinformation, and hate speech. The programme also emphasises widening participation and reducing disparities between leading and less advanced research systems, promoting equality and cohesion across the Union's research and innovation ecosystem.

These policy developments underline the strategic relevance of analysing the current implementation of GEPs at universities. The insights from this Thematic Issue offer practical guidance that is closely aligned with the EU's forward-looking commitments. The evidence-based reflections on operationalising intersectionality, fostering leadership and expertise, creating supportive infrastructures, and promoting flexible yet systemic frameworks offer valuable lessons for institutions anticipating the next phase of Horizon Europe. In this sense, the current research not only maps the state of the art but also provides stakeholders with the conceptual and practical tools to proactively engage with upcoming EU initiatives and ensure that equality, inclusion, and diversity remain at the centre of the evolving European research landscape.

6. Conclusion

The present thematic issue on GEPs in European RPOs is one of the first of its kind. The authors share their valuable experiences with the implementation of GEPs across the EU and some "associated countries." However, they draw more attention to challenges than good practices and show the clear gap between policy and practice in many cases. Advancement is clearly visible; nevertheless, key GE challenges clearly remain. One of the main requirements of GEPs—gender budgeting—remains a challenge due to budget cuts under neoliberal governance, particularly in the presence of underfinanced Research & Innovation systems and traditional gender roles, as in the CEE context. Meanwhile, the lack of resources can also be interpreted as a "resistance strategy and an excuse for inaction and not taking responsibility" (Peterson et al., 2021, p. 40, as cited in Kalpazidou Schmidt & Pedersen, 2025).

The analysis of the thematic issue highlights a variety of opportunities, follow-up actions, and lessons learnt for the expansion of GEPs in higher education institutions. EU mandates and institutional initiatives act as powerful catalysts, prompting universities to plan and implement necessary changes. The interaction between top-down directives and bottom-up advocacy often proves critical to achieving meaningful and sustainable change, while collaborative frameworks, such as university alliances, provide platforms for knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and collective learning. Local initiatives, if successful, can create a multiplier effect, influencing practices beyond the initial unit and even shaping policy at the national level. Embedding GEP activities in existing institutional structures ensures progress and guarantees long-term sustainability.

Finally, the effective scaling and replication of GEPs require careful contextualisation. One-size-fits-all approaches are insufficient; strategies must consider national, institutional, and sectoral specificities. Systemic and data-driven approaches that focus on structural changes and not just numerical targets strengthen credibility and long-term impact. Alliances and networks facilitate cross-institutional learning and mentoring, allowing less experienced institutions to benefit from existing expertise. Proactively managing resistance, adopting a holistic framework that considers individual, structural, cultural, and epistemological dimensions, and balancing institutional leadership with local flexibility are critical to sustaining transformative potential. Exploring regionally focused models can further tailor interventions to the specific socio-political environment and often leads to greater effectiveness than broad, pan-European initiatives.

Acknowledgments

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Acker, J. (1992). From sex roles to gendered institutions. *Contemporary Sociology*, *21*(5), 565–569. https://doi.org/10.2307/2075528

Arroyo, L., & Berga, A. (2025). Common measures in gender equality plans at Catalan universities from a structural change approach. *Social Inclusion*, *13*, Article 10006. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.10006

Avery, S., Van de Velde, S., Sterckx, S., & Remnant, J. (2025). An extended policy analysis of Flemish universities' intersectional commitments to sexually transgressive behaviour. *Social Inclusion*, *13*, Article 9966. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9966

Byrne, D., & Callaghan, G. (2022). *Complexity theory and the social sciences: The state of the art* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003213574

Campanini Vilhena, F. (2024). Feminist critical friendship: An approach to researching institutional change in academia. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1332/25151088Y2024D000000064

Campanini Vilhena, F., Belloso, M. L., & Cabrera, M. S. (2025). The complexity of defining institutional change in academia. *Social Inclusion*, *13*, Article 9981. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9981

Carvalho, T., White, K., & de Lourdes Machado-Taylor, M. (2013). Top university managers and affirmative

action. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 32*(4), 394–409. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-03-2011-0014

Clavero, S., & Galligan, Y. (2021). Delivering gender justice in academia through gender equality plans? Normative and practical challenges. *Gender, Work & Organization, 28*(3), 1115–1132. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12658

European Commission. (2021). *She figures 2021: Gender in research and innovation: Statistics and indicators.* https://doi.org/10.2777/06090

Kalpazidou Schmidt, E., & Pedersen, A. V. (2025). Beyond policy: The Odyssey of implementing GEPs in European academia. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 9876. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9876

Karatas, M., Löther, A., & Weber, L. (2025). Gender equality plans and inclusiveness in the European research area. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 10092. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.10092

Kuhar, R., Antić Gaber, M., & Podreka, J. (2025). Adoption of the gender equality plan as a model for institutional transformation. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 9958. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9958

Kuhar, R., & Paternotte, D. (2017). *Anti-gender campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against equality.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Lagesen, V. A., Flikke, J. K., Sletten, M., & Sørensen, K. H. (2025). From authoritative voices to dialogical policy-making: How Norwegian universities navigate diversity implementation. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 9999. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9999

Leone, C., Donnarumma, L., & de Luca, V. (2025). Gender equality and its significance for scientific research and innovation organisations: A case study. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 10105. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.10105

Lipinsky, A., & Wroblewski, A. (2021). Re-visiting gender equality policy and the role of university top management. In P. O'Connor & K. White (Eds.), *Gender, power and higher education in a globalised world* (pp. 163–186). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-69687-0_8

Lombardo, E., Meier, P., & Verloo, M. (2017). Policymaking from a gender+ equality perspective. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy, 38*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2016.1198206

Mackay, F., Kenny, M., & Chappell, L. (2010). New institutionalism through a gender lens: Towards a feminist institutionalism? *International Political Science Review, 31*(5), 573–588. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512110388788

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1983). The new institutionalism: Organizational factors in political life. *American Political Science Review, 78*(3), 734–749. https://doi.org/10.2307/1961840

Mas de Les Valls, E., Peña, M., Lusa Garcia, A., & Baltà-Salvador, R. (2025). From plans to practice: Transformative gender-in-teaching training programs through GEPs in higher education. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 9969. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9969

Mergaert, L., Linková, M., & Strid, S. (2023). Theorising gender-based violence policies: A 7P framework. *Social Sciences, 12*(7), Article 385. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12070385

Musubika, S., & Lotherington, A. T. (2025). Dissecting discourses in policy: Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) problematizations in academia. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 9855. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9855

O'Connor, P., & White, K. (Eds.). (2021). *Gender, power and higher education in a globalised world.* Springer.

Paksi, V., Tardos, K., Takács, J., Suhajda, C. J., Macanczová, J., Bojnec, Š., & Kobolák, J. (2025). Gender equality barriers in agriculture and life sciences in central european universities. *Social Inclusion, 13,* Article 10086. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.10086

Rosa, R. (2022). The trouble with 'work–life balance' in neoliberal academia: A systematic and critical review. *Journal of Gender Studies, 31*(1), 55–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2021.1933926

Šebová, M., Lukeš Rybanská, I., & Čorejová, T. (2025). Gender equality plans in Slovak universities: Between implementation and resistance. *Social Inclusion*, 13, Article 10158. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.10158

Švab, A., Leskošek, V., & Živoder, A. (2025). Gender equality plan at the University of Ljubljana: The case of work–life balance. *Social Inclusion*, *13*, Article 10014. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.10014

Tardos, K., & Paksi, V. (2024). The role of the support of top management in gender equality outcomes in higher education and research. *Feminismo/s*, *43*, 273–309. https://doi.org/10.14198/fem.2024.43.11

Tildesley, R., Lombardo, E., & Verge, T. (2022). Power struggles in the implementation of gender equality policies: The politics of resistance and counter-resistance in universities. *Politics & Gender*, *18*(4), 879–910. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X21000167

Vilarchao, M. E., Strid, S., Ipolyi, I. M., Tatsioka, Z., & Ververidou, F. (2025). Navigating resistance: Analysing the complex dynamics of resistance in gender equality policy implementation in universities. *Social Inclusion*, *13*, Article 9939. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9939

Wroblewski, A., & Grasenick, K. (2025). Navigating conflicting interests: The role of gender competent management for effective gender equality plans. *Social Inclusion*, *13*, Article 9992. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9992

Yılmaz, G., & Adak, N. (2025). Transforming organizational culture: The first gender equality plan of Akdeniz University in Turkey. *Social Inclusion*, *13*, Article 9979. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.9979

About the Authors

Katalin Tardos is a senior research fellow at the ELTE Centre for Social Sciences and a professor at the International Business School. Her research topics include gender equality in academia, social inclusion and exclusion in the labour market, different forms of employment discrimination, and workplace equality and diversity management practices. She is a member of the AGRIGEP project.

Veronika Paksi is a research fellow at the ELTE Centre for Social Sciences, adjunct professor at the University of Szeged, Hungary, and board member of the Association of Hungarian Women in Science (NaTE). Her research interests include career advancement and gender equality in science, work–life balance, and childbearing. Member of the AGRIGEP project.

Judit Takács is a research professor at the ELTE Centre for Social Sciences. Her main research interests cover family sociology, homophobia, and genderphobia. Her recent publications include a co-authored article in the *European Journal of Politics and Gender* and the co-edited volume *Paradoxical Right-Wing Sexual Politics in Europe*.

Rita Bencivenga is a senior researcher at the University of Genoa, Italy. Her research interests include gender in higher education, gender and technology, non-formal and informal adult education, and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). She is a member of the Ulysseus University Alliance, where she focuses on the implementation of EDI policies in the Alliance's activities.