



SOCIOGRAPHY GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2025

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Introduction

SOCIOGRAPHY is an independent and no-profit Research Foundation established from the transformation of the RiSSC-Research Centre on Security and Crime Association in December 2023 and dealing mostly with law and criminology, it was somehow implicit - or even taken for granted - that it was intrinsically and completely committed to foster researchers' careers and to distribute opportunities and available public and private funds in a fair and inclusive manner, avoiding any discrimination based on sex/gender, age, discipline or ethnic background, while promoting merit and excellence.

However, it is everyday more evident that gender equality is a relevant cross-cutting priority and introducing clear and strengthened provisions is very important both internally and for the stakeholders.

Accordingly, this document is the updated version of the first SOCIOGRAPHY Gender Equality Plan (GEP) elaborated in 2023, which intends to support the achievement of the requirements set by the European Commission in the framework of research and innovation (R & I) and, more in general, to set a conceptual framework and a policy instrument for ensuring the constant promotion of gender equality within the Research Centre.

In detail, it aims to formulate and present the SOCIOGRAPHY overall approach, current status and specific actions towards gender equality, intended as equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men in all their diversity, based on an inclusive approach.

It defines also new objectives to incorporate gender perspective into research activities, thus concretely contributing to social change and supporting the European Commission to promote gender equality in R&I initiatives, create gender-equal working environments, improve research quality as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced.

SOCIOGRAPHY commitment to promote gender equality in R&I projects

SOCIOGRAPHY is a no-profit Foundation established in 2023 from the transformation of RiSSC Association (founded in 2005) and dealing with research on criminal phenomena, ethics, technical assistance, education and training.

At the moment of writing, SOCIOGRAPHY is a Foundation with a limited number of employees and collaborators, very much focused on its independence, namely on the possibility to freely selecting the issues/phenomena to investigate through research, the projects to develop and the partners to collaborate with.

The research issues focus mainly on the role of new technologies in «old» and «new» crime, the globalisation of crime and the interdependencies between different criminal phenomena, both offline and online. Among others, SOCIOGRAPHY has been implementing research activities on illegal trafficking (e.g., drugs, NPS, firearms...), radicalization and terrorists financing, hate crime and hate speech, computer crime, environmental crime, corruption. From this standpoint, SOCIOGRAPHY usually plays the role of the “facilitator” between law enforcement agencies and technological providers, as well as policy makers, so that they can better understand each other positions and easily find a common ground for dialogue, mutual understanding and collaboration.

In addition, SOCIOGRAPHY is committed to exploring the complex phenomena which characterize modern societies with the intent to generate actionable knowledge. In other words, SOCIOGRAPHY invests in the life cycle of knowledge through the development of the skills, methodologies and tools necessary to generate and share knowledge on the most relevant and current topics and phenomena. Through facilitation and technical support, SOCIOGRAPHY designs paths and solutions for different stakeholders, in the public and private sectors, so that innovative ideas arise from design thinking, dialogue and collaboration for multidisciplinary scientific research, but above all for projects and concrete initiatives, for the benefit of a continually evolving society. "Sociography" means describing social phenomena especially through qualitative analysis: in a modern society that reduces everything to numbers and struggles to question the power of technology, the Sociography Foundation focuses on the person, the environment and the complex dynamics through which they interact to better understand modern society, making it more easily decodable and promote its improvement

The SOCIOGRAPHY team consists mostly of PhDs, post-docs, senior and junior researchers with criminological, sociological, economic, statistics and mathematical background.

Respecting gender equality and giving the same opportunities, roles and responsibilities to each collaborator, based only on the demonstrated professional competences and personal attitudes, has always been and still is a key asset for SOCIOGRAPHY. Merit and excellence, inclusiveness, equal opportunities, gender equality and mostly gender equity are at the basis of human resources management. Being a small organization, the systematic consideration of the differences between the personal conditions, situations and needs of each employee and collaborator, whether they were women or men, has always been and still is at the basis of all policies, decisions and actions.

To reinforce and manifest its commitment, SOCIOGRAPHY has also carried out specific research projects promoting and studying gender equality/diversity/bias at both national and European level, such as the eMORE project (<https://www.rissc.it/homepage/our-projects/emore-project/>) at European level and the DITIG ALL project (<https://www.rissc.it/homepage/our-projects/ditig-all/>) at a national level.

Moreover, SOCIOGRAPHY is also one of the members of the AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL Italian network against hate speech, which promotes, among other relevant topics, gender equality (<https://www.amnesty.it/campagne/contrasto-allhate-speech-online/>).

Drafting this Plan for promoting gender equality in R&I projects (SOCIOGRAPHY GEP) is yet another demonstration of the will to foster gender equality in scientific careers, to ensure gender balance in decision making, but also to integrate the gender dimension in R&I related activities.

Set the goals of the Plan: to nominate the Gender Equality Manager (GEM)

As the first step, SOCIOGRAPHY introduces and nominates the GEM in its organisation chart.

He/she is the reference person who has to monitor the progress of the measures identified in the GEP, to propose adjustments and make the plan move forward, according to the specific needs and requirements of the internal organisation.

Specific actions of the GEM are to:

- ✓ Monitor data about gender
- ✓ Analyse data collected
- ✓ Propose adjustment actions in case of any gender bias
- ✓ Propose topics and/or initiatives for trainings
- ✓ Organize regular progress meetings to exchange experiences, discuss any problems, and agree on future actions

Dedicated resources

SOCIOGRAPHY commits itself to dedicate specific resources for:

- Training activities related to gender bias
- Monitoring and analysing gender data
- Promoting gender balance initiatives

Data collection

SOCIOGRAPHY is committed to promote a multicultural workplace because it is an asset for improving the quality of its research activities.

Starting from this consolidated experience, the SOCIOGRAPHY GEP considers the necessity of adopting a more structured approach, monitoring and analysing gender data on annual basis, setting objectives and targets, putting in place additional actions and resources in order to contribute to the gender equality goals at EU level in R&I projects.

The general purpose from 2023 onwards is to implement a more systematic approach based on comprehending, planning, implementing and monitoring actions and processes to identify and fight imbalances, so to further guarantee a merit based working environment.

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

The access to any position within SOCIOGRAPHY is free and open to everyone. It is based exclusively upon the merit and the professional competences, skills and capacities, as well as the personal attitudes of the candidates, proved through the CV and investigated further with an interview.

Being committed to implement high-quality research activities, SOCIOGRAPHY selects its staff by ensuring open access to everyone who has the right competence and skills to perform the activities set in the R&D project. Currently, there isn't a formal recruitment code of conduct and there isn't a gender equality officer involved in the recruitment process; however, it might even be a bit redundant since SOCIOGRAPHY is still a small organization, based on a set of core moral values and ethical rules, which are shared and supported by all its members. However, SOCIOGRAPHY is available to revise and integrate its internal organisation to better structure its functioning.

SOCIOGRAPHY will keep on guaranteeing that the recruitment process and the career progression are based upon the specific competences/skills/capacities/knowledge/personal attitude owned by the candidate or the employee. Anyone who has such skills can apply without any prejudice, provided that the necessary conditions are met to ensure high quality research and a healthy, sustainable work environment.

Work-life balance and organisational culture

SOCIOGRAPHY policy promotes flexible working time arrangement agreed upon staff necessities and work/project requirements. SOCIOGRAPHY has always set its functioning around the idea that work-life balance is relevant for all the members of the staff, whatever the role and position, and everybody should be properly supported to advance his/her career alongside personal responsibilities that they may hold outside the workplace, including caring responsibilities. Unfortunately, very often it is still perceived or treated as 'a women's issue', but the point is that it is not only 'a women's issue' and SOCIOGRAPHY has always been strongly committed to improving its organisational culture so that women and men could be researchers, while playing all the roles they want to have in their personal life.

Remote working is a consolidated practice (largely before the COVID-19 pandemic in the case of RiSSC Association and still in place in SOCIOGRAPHY) because it creates a smooth and accessible working environment for everyone and mostly it gives the possibility to have a good work-life

balance. According to the team experience, it does not affect the quality of the research, provided that there is a very good internal management and a strong level of responsibility, professionalism and commitment by each person of the staff.

To facilitate and further foster the organisational culture, specific tools, platforms and instruments (e.g., Dropbox, Skype, WhatsApp, Google Workspace, Microsoft teams, Zoom, LinkedIn) are at disposal of the staff involved in the different projects, as well as in the administration and management activities. These tools encourage and promote collaboration and information sharing on a regular basis.

Common project teams and bilateral calls, web-conferences and staff meetings are regularly organised to share experiences and ideas, criticalities and difficulties; in case of problems, the possible mitigation strategies are discussed and agreed.

The attention towards personal needs and the working environment, along with an open culture and the mixed ethnic, geographic, age, gender background, create an open-minded environment which intrinsically reduce the opportunities for gender violence or sexual harassment behaviour. In its nearly twenty years of activity, SOCIOGRAPHY has never recorded any cases of gender violence or sexual harassment behaviour.

Finally, gender-neutral language is applied in all written texts.

Training and capacity building

The SOCIOGRAPHY GEP takes into consideration the needs to include awareness-raising and training actions on gender equality. These activities will be put in place in 2024 and will engage the whole organisation, under the coordination of the GEM.

The topics to be covered during the trainings will be mainly about unconscious gender biases but they will be decided and finalised on an annual basis upon staff meeting and possible specific requests.

Resources will be allocated to attend specific webinars or conferences which are considered important for the staff upon GEM proposals. Moreover, eventual initiatives promoted in the framework of the projects implemented by SOCIOGRAPHY will be shared with the staff so to facilitate participation.