Tool for comparing results

1. Challenges for the comparison

Comparing the findings from six different institutions posed several challenges which need to be considered and, if possible, resolved in any similar research endeavour. In the Equal4Europe consortium, all the components of the methodology were discussed and agreed on by the partners. Partners used the same instruments and templates to collect the information and the definitions of terms were shared. However, the comparison of the results revealed several challenges and limitations, shortly described here.

Availability of data. First, the comparison revealed differences in the availability of the data in each school. At the individual institutional level, this resulted in partners not being able to evaluate some of the set indicators. At the group level, this resulted in incomplete data in some of the examined aspects of gender equality, which means less foundation for establishing patterns. Differences in the availability of data constitutes one major limitation to the comparative analysis and results.

Definitions of categories. A second limitation of the comparative analysis was related to the use of different definitions for certain categories, such as faculty members, core faculty, or decision-making bodies, related to the different internal constitution of each school. In the case of faculty members, partners decided to use four grades (A, B, C, and D) to allow the comparison of measures across schools. Although they are generally consistent, schools made different decisions in relation to the assignment of some profiles to the established grades. For example, the assignment of affiliate professors as either grade A or D, of lecturers as either grade B or D, or the inclusion of different profiles (research, teaching, and professional) in the same grade. Similarly, partners defined differently what was meant by core faculty or highest and executive management.

Differences in calculations. Third, some of the calculations were made differently at the schools. For example, the calculation of the gender pay gap generally implied dividing the average salary for women of one rank by the average salary for men in the same rank. However, in some cases the analysis also considered other variables, such as the academic field, the year of tenure or additional institutional responsibilities, as recommended by Chamberlain[1]. In some cases, the calculations differed from what was agreed upon, which was related to the fact that in some schools the gender pay gap was calculated by Human Resources personnel and not directly by researchers, so there was little control of the analysis.

Lack of context and explanations. Furthermore, in the institutional reports, schools described the measurements and variations of gender equality indicators, but in most cases, they did not provide an explanation of the patterns or processes at their institutions. Consequently, differences in measurements between schools were identified but could not be explained in the comparative report.

Lack of long-term data. Finally, given that most indicators were collected for one academic year, we could make any statement about longer trends. In some cases, partners were instructed and able to collect data for the last three years, but this was rather exceptional. Consequently, results from the institutional reports described a "snapshot" of the current situation of gender equality at the schools. The low reliability of the results increased in all areas with few cases.

2. Visualization

To make the comparison between the different measures at the six schools visually clearer and the tables easier to understand at a glance, a colour coding system was used to identify the degree of gender (in)equality in every measure. Five categories were created, instead of the usual two (where representation within the 40/60 range is balanced and outside the range is imbalanced (European Commission, 2019[2])), to increase the distinctness of levels of gender inequality, in a range from high inequality favouring men (red) through a category of gender equality (green) and ending with high inequality favouring women (blue). As shown in the Table, the categories correspond to differences in the proportion of men and women in any measure. The colour grey was used to indicate that the information was not available at a school and NA (not applicable) when the process or position did not exist at a school during the study period.

COLOUR CODE SYSTEM

Level of gender inequality	Differences in the proportion of men and women	Example	Colour Case

[1] Chamberlain, A. (2017). How to Analyze Your Gender Pay Gap: An Employer's Guide. Available from: https://www.glassdoor.com/research/app/uploads/sites/2/2019/03/GD_Report_AnalyzingGenderPayGap_v2-2.pdf

[2] European Commission (2019). She Figures 2018. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

High inequality favouring men	Equal or above 30.1%	Men: 70%, Women: 30%	Dark red
Medium inequality favouring men	15.1-30%	Men: 62%, Women: 38%	Light red
Gender equality or low inequality	0-15%	Men: 55%, Women: 45%	Green
Medium inequality favouring women	15.1-30%	Men: 38%, Women: 62%	Light blue
High inequality favouring women	Equal or above 30.1%	Men: 30%, Women: 70%	Dark blue