



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 741128



First ACT International Synergy Conference

Building Communities of Practice (CoPs) to help advance gender equality in the European Research Area and specifically to improve careers, decision making and the integration of the gender dimension in research

The [ACT project](#) (Communities of PrACTice for Accelerating Gender Equality and Institutional Change in Research and Innovation across Europe) is coordinated by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and comprises 17 institutions from 10 European countries and Argentina. The GEECCO partners, the Politechnika Krakowska (PK) and Yellow Window, attended the First International Synergy Conference that took place in Brussels on 25 February as experts in the field of gender equality in research and innovation and human research excellence. Most of the event involved participatory activities and open discussion, in addition to a general introduction to the ACT project and contributions from invited CoP experts.



Photo 1: from right to left, Lut Mergaert from Yellow Window, Maxime Forest and Lidia Żakowsk from the PK

The conference was opened by **Signe Ratso**, deputy director-general of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission (EC). The ACT project supports H2020 projects such as GEECCO that focus on the implementation of gender equality plans.

GEECCO partners were involved in participatory activities and an open discussion devoted to **institutional changes towards the implementation of gender equality measures, the need to gain commitment and support from stakeholders and decision makers, and the need to reach outside of academia to raise awareness of discrimination against students.**



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In addition, according to Lidia Żakowsk, the main researcher from the PK involved in GEECCO, thanks to the **exchange of good practices** there was an opportunity to learn about how to gain support from the EC, how to engage men on this issue and how to overcome gender inequality in R&D.

The **ACT work plan includes putting into practice actions to include gender equality in all European Research Area priorities**: the career progression of women; their presence in decision making; gender content in research and education and the continued exchange of experiences among non-governmental organisations gender equality experts, researchers, teachers, policy makers, students and activists.



Photo 2: Polish delegates from the Jagiellonian University

Polish delegates from the Jagiellonian University representing the ACT project led one of the seven workshops dedicated to building strategies for **CoPs for gender equality**.

For more information, please visit www.act-on-gender.eu/act-events/1st-act-international-synergy-conference. Be part of #ACTonGender!

For more information on the GEECCO project or to contact the project consortium, please visit us at <http://www.geecco-project.eu>, [subscribe to our newsletter](#) or stay tuned through [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).