

INSTITUTE FOR MIGRATION RESEARCH

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2026-2030

Strategic and operational institutional document

Zagreb, 2026.

ADOPTION CLAUSE

Pursuant to the Statute of the Institute for Migration Research and upon the proposal of the Director M. Perić Kaselj, PhD, the Governing Board of the Institute, at its 37. session held on September 22, 2026, adopts the Gender Equality Plan 2026-2030.

Status and authoritative version

The Croatian and English versions form one institutional strategic document. In the event of divergent interpretation, the Croatian version shall prevail.

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PART II. ENGLISH VERSION

This version is a full translation of the Croatian institutional strategic plan. In the event of legal or interpretative ambiguity, the Croatian version prevails.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Migration Research (hereinafter: the Institute) adopts the Gender Equality Plan 2026-2030 (hereinafter: the Plan) as a medium-term strategic and operational document that integrates gender equality into governance, employment relations, scientific activity, career development, protection of dignity and the Institute's public role. It continues the commitment established by the 2022-2025 Plan, while adding a clearer baseline analysis, measurable objectives, dedicated resources, an annual dataset, accountable ownership and evaluation procedures.

Gender equality is not limited to the numerical representation of women and men. It concerns the quality of working experience, equal access to information and opportunities, fairness of procedures, safety from discrimination and harassment, the ability to reconcile professional and private responsibilities, and the quality of research results. Numerical balance in a category is therefore not proof that all barriers have been removed, just as a deviation in a small group does not by itself prove discrimination. The Plan combines quantitative indicators with qualitative findings and context.

The Institute works in migration and related social research, where sex, gender, age, family roles, legal status, social position, ethnic and migrant background, and experiences of violence or discrimination are often interconnected. The gender dimension is therefore relevant not only to internal governance but also to the scientific relevance of research questions, samples, methods, interpretation and dissemination. The Plan supports research that recognises different experiences of women and men, avoids stereotypes and transparently explains when the gender dimension is not scientifically relevant.

The Plan follows the logic of the Croatian National Plan for Gender Equality: it starts from a vision and analysis of needs and challenges, identifies priorities and specific objectives, links them to outcome indicators and targets, develops measures, resources, timelines and responsibilities, and establishes a framework for monitoring, evaluation, communication and consultation. At institutional level, this requires proportionality, strong privacy protection in small groups, and direct links to recruitment, research and governance processes.

The Plan applies to all bodies, organisational units, staff, posts, projects, editorial boards, events, business travel, field and digital work and other activities organised by or under the responsibility of the Institute. Relevant principles and rules apply to external collaborators, visitors and partners to the extent permitted by contractual and organisational relationships.

2. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.1. Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Plan is to establish a permanent institutional system for early identification of inequality, targeted action, monitoring of results and accountable management of change. It also meets the process-related requirements applied to public research organisations in the European Research Area: formal publication and management signature, dedicated staff capacity and expertise, collection of sex/gender-disaggregated data and annual reporting based on indicators, and training for staff and decision-makers.

2.2. Persons and data covered

The primary population is Institute staff. Student data are not a permanent category because the Institute is not a higher education institution enrolling a student population. When the Institute formally hosts doctoral candidates, interns, scholarship holders, trainees or participants in teaching and mentoring, aggregate sex-disaggregated data will be monitored where relevant, lawful and sufficiently numerous to protect privacy. Other sensitive characteristics must not be inferred; they may be collected only voluntarily, for a clear purpose, with a lawful basis and safeguards.

2.3. Preparation and participation

The Plan is based on documentary analysis of the previous Plan, the national strategic framework, European programme requirements and available institutional data as at 31 December 2025. During the first implementation year, the analysis will be supplemented by an anonymous organisational climate survey, review of internal procedures and staff consultation. Baselines that are not currently available will therefore be established transparently and verifiably rather than invented.

2.4. Interpretation of data

Because the total workforce is small, a change of one person may substantially alter a percentage. Counts and percentages must therefore be reported together, changes in category definitions explained, and small subgroups withheld where identification is possible. Public reporting follows data minimisation, while more detailed information is restricted to authorised persons. A statistical finding triggers a question and review; it is not, by itself, a final explanation of cause.

3. LEGAL AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Plan is adopted within the Croatian constitutional, labour, anti-discrimination and scientific framework and the European and international commitments applicable to the Institute. Laws and strategies apply as amended, and the references in this document do not limit the application of later changes or new binding rules.

- the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the constitutional principle of gender equality;
- the Gender Equality Act, the Anti-Discrimination Act and the Labour Act, as amended;
- the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity and rules governing employment, dignity at work, personal data protection, whistleblower protection and occupational safety;
- the National Plan for Gender Equality until 2027 and its implementation documents;
- the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030;
- the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030;
- Horizon Europe requirements for gender equality plans and for integrating the gender dimension into research and innovation content;
- the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
- the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda, especially Sustainable Development Goal 5;
- the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029;
- the Statute, development strategy, regulations, code of ethics, dignity-at-work instruments and other applicable internal acts of the Institute.

The Croatian National Plan until 2027 emphasises women's human rights and gender equality, women in the labour market, combating violence, gender-sensitive education, women's participation in decision-making and gender mainstreaming in public policy. This Plan translates those priorities into institutional processes: staff management, career development, research projects, editorial work, ethical and safety procedures and annual management reporting.

The European research and innovation framework requires a publicly available and signed Plan, clearly assigned responsibilities and staff capacity, annual data and reporting, and training. It recommends concrete measures and targets in work-life balance, leadership and decision-making, recruitment and career progression, integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching, and measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment. This document treats all of those as core areas and adds governance, intersectionality, communication and risk assessment.

Alignment after 2027: following adoption of a new Croatian national strategic document, the Institute will carry out an alignment review within six months and, where necessary, amend the indicators, measures or timelines of this Plan.

4. MEDIUM-TERM VISION AND PRINCIPLES

4.1. Vision for 2030

By 2030 the Institute is a working and research environment in which procedures are transparent, persons are protected from discrimination and harassment, professional and private responsibilities can be reasonably reconciled, leadership and scientific opportunities are allocated through clear criteria, and the gender dimension systematically improves research quality and societal relevance. Staff understand their rights and responsibilities, trust the protection channels and can participate in improving organisational culture.

4.2. Expected institutional effect

By the end of the period the Institute should have a stable annual data and reporting cycle, trained decision-makers, documented recruitment and appointment procedures, development discussions and mentoring support, a gender-dimension checklist for projects, a zero-tolerance protocol, guidance for field and digital work, and demonstrable use of staff feedback. Success will be judged not only by the number of activities but by changed processes, access to opportunities, staff experience and quality of handling.

4.3. Implementation principles

- equality of rights, opportunities, responsibilities and benefits for women and men;
- gender mainstreaming as a horizontal principle in governance, research and communication;
- intersectionality and attention to the interaction of sex/gender with age, disability, migrant or ethnic background, family status, contract type, career stage and other relevant circumstances;
- transparency, measurability, accountability and timely corrective action;
- staff participation and social dialogue;
- protection of privacy, confidentiality and dignity, and prohibition of retaliation;
- proportionality to the size of the Institute and avoidance of conclusions based solely on very small groups;
- scientific excellence, methodological justification and ethical responsibility.

5. BASELINE ANALYSIS

5.1. Staff structure as at 31 December 2025

As at 31 December 2025, the Institute employs 43 persons, including 26 women and 17 men. Research staff number 35, including 21 women and 14 men. Administration and professional advisers number eight, including five women and three men. There are two assistants and senior assistants, one woman and one man. The assistants and senior assistants category is a subset of research staff and is not added separately to the total workforce.

Category	Total	Women	Men
All staff	43	26 (60.5%)	17 (39.5%)
Research staff	35	21 (60.0%)	14 (40.0%)
Administration and professional advisers	8	5 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)
Assistants and senior assistants*	2	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)

** Assistants and senior assistants are included in research staff. They are shown separately to monitor the early-career stage but are not added to the total.*



Figure 1. Ratio of women and men by staff category, 31 December 2025.

5.2. Interpretation of baseline data

Women form a majority of all staff, research staff, and administration and professional advisers. The research-staff ratio is 60:40, while the early-career assistants category is 1:1. These figures indicate that the Institute does not face general under-representation of women in employment. However, the available aggregates do not answer questions about distribution of leadership roles, contract type and duration, promotion, supplements, project leadership, authorship, editorial positions, leave, access to training or organisational culture. The Plan introduces monitoring in precisely these areas.

Compared with 2022, the total number of staff increased from 27 to 43. In the previous Plan women accounted for 18 of 27 staff, or 66.7%; in 2025 they account for 60.5%. Categories of scientific and professional positions are not fully comparable because of changes in the number and classification of positions. Therefore, trends must be interpreted with caution. The stable share of women—approximately 60%—in scientific positions indicates sustained representation, yet it does not eliminate the need to analyze vertical distribution and career outcomes.

5.3. Data gaps to be closed in 2026

- sex composition of all leadership, governance, advisory, selection, editorial and project bodies;
- contract type, working time, career stage and progression in categories broad enough to protect privacy;
- applicants, shortlisted and selected candidates in recruitment and appointment procedures;
- access to training, mobility, conferences, mentoring, project leadership and other professional opportunities;
- use of relevant leave and return to work, without disclosure of identifiable family or health information;
- staff experience of workload, inclusion, safety, bias and trust in procedures;
- gender-dimension screening in proposals and research outputs;
- aggregate prevention, reporting and handling data concerning harassment, under strict confidentiality.

5.4. Students and other participants

The Institute has no permanent student population. The indicator is marked N/A unless a formal group of doctoral candidates, interns, scholarship holders or programme participants exists for which annual reporting is meaningful. Where such a group exists, the same rules apply: collect only necessary data, use voluntary disclosure for sensitive categories, aggregate, protect small groups and assign clear responsibility for processing.

6. DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL

6.1. Governance and implementation capacity

The previous Plan established a basic commitment, but the new cycle requires clearer ownership, dedicated staff time and regular reporting. Without a clear division of responsibilities and access to relevant data, there is a risk that activities depend on the personal involvement of individuals. Due to the clear hierarchy and structure within the Institute, communication between employees and corrective measures can be implemented in a short time through regulations, forms and daily activities.

6.2. Work-life balance

Research work involves deadlines, travel, conferences, field research, publishing and project cycles that may affect staff with responsibilities differently. Formally equal rules can have unequal effects if meeting times, unpredictability or career penalties for statutory leave are ignored. The institute has the capacity for more predictable planning, transparent consideration of requests and structured organization of the work of employees in all categories.

6.3. Organisational culture and invisible work

In addition to formal duties, organisations rely on mentoring, emotional support, minute-taking, organising and representational work that may be unevenly allocated. The value and visibility of such work for progression should be considered. The introduction of anonymous surveys, development interviews and counseling should enable the recognition of patterns and procedures that are not visible from employee records.

6.4. Leadership and decision-making

Overall representation of women does not guarantee balance in the most influential functions. The Institute must monitor who chairs bodies, leads projects, allocates resources, mentors early-career staff and represents the organisation. For smaller organizational units, the mechanical application of percentage-based targets is not always feasible; therefore, the Plan introduces the principle of striving for a minimum 40% representation of each gender, a requirement for transparent appointment criteria, and a need to provide a justification in cases of significant deviations.

6.5. Recruitment and career development

Bias may arise in criteria, assessment of career interruptions, assumptions about mobility, informal invitations to projects, allocation of mentoring or visible assignments, and should therefore be minimized. Standardized selection procedures, appropriate training for committees, documented career development discussions, and an analysis of access to career opportunities make it possible to verify that procedures are applied equally and without discrimination. Particular attention should be paid to assistants and senior assistants, as early-career decisions have a long-term impact on career progression.

6.6. Gender dimension in migration research

Migration is not gender-neutral: women and men may have different reasons for migrating and face different risks along the way, as well as differing positions in the labor market, caregiving responsibilities, integration experiences, exposure to violence, and legal statuses. Scientific quality requires systematic verification, appropriate categories, the avoidance of stereotypical assumptions, and a transparent rationale for decisions. The Institute has the potential to develop a distinctive methodological practice in this area and apply it to projects, publications, and public policy consulting.

6.7. Gender-based violence, harassment and safety

Risks do not arise only in the office. Field interviews, work with vulnerable populations, business travel, conferences, accommodation, digital communication and hierarchical relations can also be places of harassment, insecurity, and violence. A low number of reports is not a sufficient safety indicator because it may also reflect distrust or fear of consequences. Clear concepts, multiple confidential channels, trained contacts, non-retaliation and annual prevention are therefore required.

6.8. Intersectionality and privacy

The Institute studies populations in which gender may intersect with migration status, ethnicity, disability, age, socioeconomic position, family situation or other characteristics. An intersectional approach improves analysis but can raise identification risks in small groups. The Plan therefore requires a clear purpose, proportionality, voluntariness where needed, separate management of public and restricted internal data and ethical management when sharing qualitative research data.

7. CONDENSED PRIORITIES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES 2026-2030

The priorities are condensed into implementable institutional commitments focused on equal treatment of women and men, transparent procedures, quality of work and dignity at work.

No.	Priority	Specific objective
1	Governance, data and training	Establish clear implementation responsibility, annual data collection and regular reporting.
2	Work-life balance and organisational culture	Provide a predictable and supportive work environment with equal treatment of women and men. Particular attention should be paid to the following categories of employees—mothers and fathers with young children, mothers and fathers with three or more children, and employees caring for elderly or dependent family members—through the introduction of flexible work arrangements (such as flexible working hours, remote work options, etc.).
3	Leadership and decision-making	Ensure transparent access to leadership, governance, editorial and project roles.
4	Recruitment and career development	Standardise recruitment, progression, mentoring and access to professional opportunities.
5	Research quality and analysis of sex-related differences	Where scientifically relevant, assess whether differences between women and men affect the research question, sample, analysis or results.
6	Dignity at work, harassment prevention and participation	Provide clear rules, confidential channels, timely handling and two-way staff communication.

8. KEY OUTCOME INDICATORS AND TARGET VALUES

Indicators are used for annual monitoring of processes and outcomes. For small groups they are interpreted together with absolute counts and privacy safeguards.

Code	Indicator	Baseline	Target / standard by 2030
I-1	Adoption and publication of the Plan	Previous 2022-2025 Plan	Plan formally adopted, signed and publicly available in Croatian and English.
I-2	Completeness of the annual dataset	Partly available	At least 95% of defined indicators, with reasoned N/A where applicable.
I-3	Annual implementation report	Not systematically published	One bilingual report each year, normally by 31 March.
I-4	Training of decision-makers and staff	Establish in 2026	100% of governance-body members by end-2027; regular staff information and training.
I-5	Response to anonymous organisational-climate survey	No baseline	At least 70% response and at least one corrective action where findings require it.
I-6	Handling of work-life reconciliation requests	No standard indicator	100% documented, assessed under equal criteria and resolved in a timely manner.
I-7	Transparency of leadership and appointments	To a large extent standardized	Annual composition review; 100% of relevant appointments with pre-defined criteria and a documented record.
I-8	Vacancies and candidate selection	Partly standardised	100% of vacancies with clear criteria and equal-opportunity wording; panels briefed on impartial selection.
I-9	Development discussions and mentoring	Establish in 2027	Discussion offered to all staff at least annually; early-career posts with documented mentoring plans.
I-10	Access to professional opportunities and career outcomes	No integrated analysis	One analysis each year; corrective action for each identified unexplained gap.
I-11	Screening of sex relevance in project proposals	Not standardised	From 2027, all external proposals screened or justified as scientifically not applicable.
I-12	Dignity at work and handling of reports	Alignment required	Clear protocol and confidential channel

9. CONDENSED IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The measures are implemented within ordinary institutional capacity and existing responsibilities.

Code	Area	Measure and key activities	Lead	Timing
1.1	Governance	Confirm the Committee mandate and appoint an implementation coordinator; hold at least two working meetings each year.	Governing Board; Director	30 days; then continuous
1.2	Data and reporting	Establish an annual sex-disaggregated dataset on staff, recruitment, progression, training, decision-making bodies and project leadership; publish only reliable data.	Committee; relevant services	Annually
1.3	Training	At least annually provide practical training on equal treatment, impartial decision-making, dignity at work and the responsibilities of decision-makers.	Committee; Director	Annually
2.1	Organisational climate	Run an anonymous survey on workload, work-life balance, access to career-opportunities, safety and trust in procedures.	Committee	From 2026
2.2	Organisation of work	Communicate flexible-work and leave options clearly; structure return after extended leave and schedule meetings at scheduled appointments.	Director; managers	Continuous
3.1	Leadership monitoring	Annually monitor and report the sex composition of governance, advisory, editorial and project bodies using both counts and percentages.	Committee	Annually
3.2	Transparent appointments	Pre-define criteria and document decisions for leadership, editorial, mentoring and project roles; with regard to gender equality.	Competent bodies	Continuous
4.1	Recruitment and selection	Standardise vacancy notices, criteria and records and brief panels on impartial assessment before selection.	HR/legal; panels	By end-2026; then continuous

9. CONDENSED IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES - continued

Code	Area	Measure and key activities	Lead	Timing
4.2	Development and mentoring	Offer all staff to communicate about career development, with particular attention to assistants and senior assistants.	Director; managers; mentors	Continuous
4.3	Equal access to opportunities	Annually analyse access to training, conferences, mobility, project leadership, authorship, editorial roles and progression by sex and career stage.	Committee; managers	Annually
5.1	Project screening	When submitting project proposals, adhere to the ethical principles of equal representation and equal treatment.	Project leads	Continuous
5.2	Methodological support	Where relevant and ethically permissible, report data by sex and explain categories, limitations and privacy safeguards; provide a regular training through methodological workshops.	Research units; ethics bodies	Continuous
6.1	Protocol and channels	Align zero-tolerance rules on harassment, sexual harassment, retaliation and unacceptable conduct; appoint at least one trained contact and at least one confidential channel.	Director; legal	By end 2027.
6.2	Prevention and safety	At least annually brief staff on professional boundaries, reporting and support, and maintain guidance for fieldwork, travel and digital work.	Committee; occupational safety; project leads	Annually
6.3	Communication and participation	Publish key documents in Croatian and English and provide at least one annual open consultation and an anonymous proposal channel.	Committee; communications	Continuous

10. EXPERTISE AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The Committee may propose external expertise in gender equality, labour law, dignity at work, personal data protection or evaluation. Decisions, implementation and monitoring remain with the competent Institute bodies.

11. ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL AND EU FRAMEWORKS

The Plan does not mechanically reproduce national objectives. It translates them into areas the Institute can directly change and measure. Alignment is monitored at the level of priorities, processes and expected outcomes.

Institute Plan area	Connection with higher-level strategic framework
Governance, data and training	Horizon Europe: formal publication and signature, annual data and reporting, and training; National Plan: objectives 1 and 6; National Development Strategy: equal opportunities.
Work-life balance	Horizon Europe: work-life balance and organisational culture; National Plan: women in the labour market and reconciliation of responsibilities.
Leadership and decision-making	Horizon Europe: balance of women and men in leadership; National Plan: women in decision-making.
Recruitment and careers	Horizon Europe: equality in recruitment and progression; National Plan: labour market, dignity at work and transparency.
Research quality and sex-based analysis	Horizon Europe: consideration of sex in research and innovation content where scientifically relevant; National Plan: responsible integration of equality considerations.
Dignity at work and harassment	Horizon Europe: measures against harassment and sexual harassment; National Plan: violence prevention and dignity at work.
Communication and participation	National Plan: equality awareness, communication, monitoring and consultation; EU Strategy 2026-2030: integration of equality into institutional processes.

The Institute will incorporate new guidance and implementation documents through the annual alignment review rather than waiting for the expiry of this Plan where earlier adaptation is required.

12. MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION

12.1. Annual implementation cycle

Period	Activity
January-February	close data as at 31 December; verify quality, privacy and comparability; analyse gaps.
By 31 March	adopt and publish the bilingual annual report and corrective-action plan.
April-June	training, staff consultation and implementation of priority corrective action.
July-September	review measure implementation, projects and career opportunities; update risks.
October-November	plan activities for the following year.
December	final implementation check; annual dataset reference date.

12.2. Annual report content

- management summary: key changes and findings;
- indicator table with baseline, previous, current and target value;
- implemented measures and deviations from the Plan;
- analysis of recruitment, progression, leadership, training and project opportunities;
- aggregate prevention and handling information on harassment, without identifiable data;
- risks, obstacles, corrective actions, responsible persons and deadlines;
- work plan for the following year.

12.3. Mid-term and final evaluation

The mid-term review in 2028 covers data for 2026-2027, an anonymous survey, structured consultation, review of alignment with new national documents and assessment of target feasibility. The Governing Board reviews the report and decides on amendments where indicators are unsuitable, objectives insufficiently ambitious or measures ineffective. The final evaluation is completed by 31 December 2030 and directly informs the next Plan.

12.4. Corrective-action rule

Where an indicator materially misses its target or an adverse trend appears, the annual report must specify the likely cause, additional data needed, responsible person, corrective measure and deadline. Where a methodological change is necessary, old and new methods should be shown in parallel as far as possible.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

13.1. Communication objectives

- ensure that all staff understand the objectives, rights, responsibilities and support channels;
- report indicators, measures, results and data limitations transparently;
- connect equality of women and men with scientific quality, work processes and safety, not only formal compliance;
- enable two-way communication and visible response to staff proposals;
- strengthen the Institute's external visibility as a responsible research organisation.

13.2. Audiences and messages

Audience	Key message	Channels
All staff	The Plan governs concrete procedures, rights, responsibilities and participation.	email/intranet, meetings, training, annual report
Decision-makers and panel members	Equality of women and men is a governance responsibility and part of decision quality.	targeted training, checklists, reports
Researchers and project teams	Analysis of differences between women and men improves research relevance where scientifically justified.	methodological workshops, project forms, consultation
Applicants and external collaborators	The Institute applies transparent criteria, zero tolerance of harassment and equal opportunity.	vacancies, contracts, website, codes
Academic and general public	The Institute publicly reports objectives, measures and results.	website, publications, events, annual report

13.3. Communication standards

Key documents are published in Croatian and English. Materials should be digitally accessible, readable and written in clear language. Communication about reports or cases must never contain identifiable information. An increase of reports may reflect greater trust in the system rather than reduced safety.

13.4. Annual communication calendar

- first quarter: annual report and headline indicator summary;
- second quarter: training and open consultation;
- third quarter: methodological activity for researchers and review of project practice;
- fourth quarter: dignity-at-work awareness, reporting channels and the activity plan for the following year.

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Zagreb, September 22, 2026

President of the Governing Board



Mladen Vedriš, PhD

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Marina Peric Kaselj, PhD