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# After #MeToo Sexism and Sexual Harassment in Academia Proceedings



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RESEARCH

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**After #MeToo, Sexism and Sexual  
Harassment in Academia**  
Proceedings

## 1st June 2022 | What has been done

**11:00 am** Arrival (possibility to have lunch at your expense at a cafeteria located in the building)

**12:15 pm** **Introduction**  
 Karen Maex - Rector UVA, Chair of LERU  
 Yves Flückiger - Rector, University of Geneva  
 Michel Denken - Rector, University of Strasbourg  
 Kevin Coutinho - Co-president, EDI Policy Group LERU  
 Isabelle Kraus - Vice-rector, University of Strasbourg  
 Juliette Labarthe - Director of Equality opportunities, University of Geneva

### Institutions' commitment

**12:40 pm** Dealing with sexism and sexual harassment from a university's perspective

**Keynote:** Brigitte Tag - Professor, University of Zurich

**1:00 pm** TELLUS: Breaking the silence around sexual harassment at Lund University through research, integrated support, and open dialogue

**Keynote:** Anette Agardh - Professor, University of Lund

**1:30 pm** Discussion

**Panel:** Anette Agardh - Professor, University of Lund  
 Brigitte Galliot - Vice-rector, University of Geneva  
 Maria Mortensen - Diversity consultant, University of Southern Denmark  
 Núria Rodríguez Avila - Vice-dean, University of Barcelona  
 Brigitte Tag - Professor, University of Zurich  
 Alice Débauche - Virage-Université, University of Strasbourg

**Moderation:** Tomas Brage - Professor, University of Lund

### Cost of harassment for universities

**2:30 pm** The true cost of sexual harassment

**Keynote:** Bettina Palazzo - Business ethics consultant, Lausanne

**3:00 pm** Discussion

**Panel:** Verane Achard - Doctor, Geneva University Hospitals  
 Corinne Charbonnel - Professor-mentor, University of Geneva  
 Adèle B. Combes - PhD, inquiry on harassment in academia, Paris  
 Jérôme Lacour - Dean, University of Geneva  
 Bettina Palazzo - Business ethics consultant, Lausanne  
 Lucile Peytavin - historian, book on the costs of virility, Paris  
 Irene Schmidlin - Lawyer, Lausanne

**Moderation:** Myret Zaki - Economic Journalist, Lausanne

**4:00 pm** Coffee break

### Communication and campaign

**4:15 pm** How to communicate and break silence?

**Keynote:** Brigitte Mantilleri - Referent EDI Group, LERU, University of Geneva

**4:25 pm** Discussion

**Panel:** Marco Cattaneo - Director Communication Office, University of Geneva  
 Brigitte Mantilleri - Consultant, Geneva  
 David von Ritter - Cavalcade Marketing agency, Lausanne  
 Morgane Wüthrich - Director Equality Office, University of Neuchâtel

**Moderation:** Kevin Coutinho - Athena Swan Manager, University College London

**5:25 pm** Spec(a)tor - Theatre Forum international

**6:55 pm** End of the conference

## 2st June 2022 | What can still be done

**9:00 am** **Introduction**  
 Brigitte Galliot - Vice-rector, University of Geneva  
 Elisabeth Demont - Vice-president, University of Strasbourg

### Building bridges between field and theory

**9:10 am** Experience from the field

**Keynote:** Isabelle Kraus - Vice-rector, University of Strasbourg

**9:40 am** Discussion

**Panel:** Niels Dupont - Safety Engineer, CERN/University of Geneva  
 Isabelle Kraus - Vice-president, University of Strasbourg  
 Pete Mandeville - Support Service, University of Oxford  
 Patrick Meraldi - Professor, University of Geneva  
 Héliène Rey-Hanson - External harassment support, Geneva  
 Christine Sattiva - Lawyer, Lausanne  
 Aude Thorel - Director HR, University of Geneva

**Moderation:** Karin Gilland Lutz - Equal Opportunity deputy, University of Zurich

**10:40 am** Coffee break

**11:00 am** How can research help the field?

**Keynote:** Liisa Husu - Professor, University of Örebro

**11:30 am** Discussion

**Panel:** Aya Ezawa - Diversity officer, University of Leiden  
 Klea Faniko - Researcher, University of Geneva  
 Louise Carvalho - Diversity & Inclusion Program Leader, CERN  
 Jadranka Gvozdanovic - Professor, University of Heidelberg  
 Lorraine Leeson - Ass. Vice Provost EDI, Trinity College  
 Liisa Husu - Professor, University of Örebro

**Moderation:** Eileen Drew - Professor, Trinity College/University of Lund

**12:30** Lunch

### Student's involvement in prevention

**1:45 pm** Discussion

**Panel:** Marion Albert - Student Federation (AFGES), University of Strasbourg  
 Camille Bleeker - Student, CLASH, University of Geneva  
 Lara Chavaz - Student, CLASH, University of Geneva  
 Angèle Gayet-Ageron - Professor, University of Geneva  
 Diane Higelin - Student CELVS, University of Geneva  
 Severina Kidikova - Student (AFGES), University of Strasbourg  
 Tiia Niemi - Student, University of Helsinki

**Moderation:** Girogia Magni - PhD, University of Geneva

**2:45 pm** Testimonials

**Readers:** Laure Razon - Professor, University of Strasbourg  
 Tanya Orozoco-Hinojosa - PhD, University of Strasbourg

**3:30 pm** Coffee break

### And tomorrow? Agenda of the future

**3:45 pm** Discussion with the audience

**Moderation:** Isabelle Kraus and Brigitte Mantilleri

**4:30 pm** Exem - Illustrator, Geneva

**5:00 pm** End of the conference

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# Introduction

You have before you the proceedings of the conference **After #MeToo: Sexism and Sexual Harassment in Academia** which took place on 1-2 June 2022 at the Campus Biotech in Geneva. This was the third conference of the EDI Policy Group of the League of European Research Universities (LERU), co-organised by the universities of Geneva and Strasbourg.

All universities are confronted with situations of harassment that impact both the victims and academic performance. Universities have a duty to prevent harassment and to provide a safe learning and working environment. We therefore chose topics for this conference such as questioning the commitment of institutions, revealing the costs of harassment, and reflecting on communication issues to break the silence. Without forgetting to look at experiences in the field with the contributions of research. Finally, we left a space for students, who have been involved in this struggle for a long time and who are often the most affected and least protected.

We also wanted to hear testimonies and encourage people to talk about their experiences. A theatre group played a few scenes, which were a great success with people really getting into the spirit. In addition, Exem, a famous illustrator from Geneva, illustrated the conference in some sketches shared with the public at the end of the conference. You can find them throughout this publication.

The conference took the form of mini conferences of specialists followed by discussion panels. We wanted to transcribe the atmosphere of these two very lively days for the conference proceedings. Therefore, this booklet is divided into three sections: first, the lectures; second, some quotes from the discussion panels where people generously shared their experience and ideas; third, some key points consisting of insights, focuses and actions for a future agenda, with the idea of creating a preventive instrument against harassment in the institutions.

To conclude, the subject is changing, the ways of approaching it are also changing and each person and institution must find its own way of implementing prevention. One thing is certain: in June, everyone agreed that we must act quickly and well.

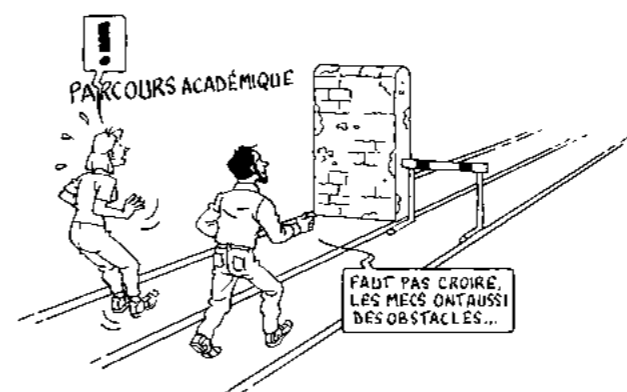
**Brigitte Mantilleri, University of Geneva**



**Man on the left:** And now she's complaining to the rector because I came on her in the lift!

**Man on the right:** What? She got in the same lift as you?!... She was looking for it then!...

## Introduction speeches



**Text:** Academic career path

**Man on the right:** Don't fool yourself, men face barriers too...

During the conference, various people gave introductory speeches. We would like to thank each of these people with a quote from their speech:

"The cases we had to deal with show that we need to 'change' managers, raise awareness, make these matters a topic for discussion within departments, and we need to have internal discussions about the balance of power in universities, the dependencies which exist and the risks they provoke."

**Karen Maex, President of the University of Amsterdam and Chair of LERU**

"All together as LERU university members, we need to be exemplar. All together we need to exchange best practices to improve ourselves. All together we will be able to change the future of our institution. All together we are stronger."

**Yves Flückiger, Rector of the University of Geneva**

"The first battle to win is the battle of trust. I would like to thank the first students who had the courage to come, and to trust us. It was difficult for them to talk because they felt it was David against Goliath."

**Michel Deneken, President of the University of Strasbourg**

"There are many differences within us but there are also many commonalities...to share and to explore the work more profoundly in order to be able to catalyse change."

**Kevin Couthino, Co-Chair EDI Policy Group LERU**

"How our institutions deal with sexual harassment, are there possible improvements? Mixed reaction. We continue to discuss the issue and agreed that the topic of those two days will be prevention... We began with mixed interest in 2017 and in 2022 we are all together. We are at the beginning of a path."

**Isabelle Kraus, Vice-President of the University of Strasbourg**

"We have to collect data, to launch campaigns, to prevent, to protect, to inform and to report on the number of cases."

**Juliette Labarthe, Head of Equality and Diversity Service of the University of Geneva**

"Four types of action are critical: Offer the best and most transparent contractual conditions to all members of the university community; develop awareness on the thematic; promote training at all levels and promote research on these topics."

**Brigitte Galliot, Vice-President of the University of Geneva**

"Women are not considered as they should be. For instance, we face a lack of female students in sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics in our universities. This has an impact on what is studied and even on what is learned."

**Frederique Berrod, Vice-President of the University of Strasbourg**



Illustration of the play that took place during the conference

# 1. Institutions' commitment

Two keynote speakers took the lead on this first topic:

First, Brigitte Tag, Professor of Law at the University of Zurich, who has years of experience as an investigator in harassment cases.

Second, Anette Agardh, Professor of Global Health at the University of Lund, and leader of the TELLUS project: Sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation at Lund University.

## Dealing with sexism and sexual harassment from a university's perspective

**"Ethics shapes the culture and law shapes its enforcement."**  
Brigitte Tag

Brigitte Tag is a professor of Law at the University of Zurich. She talked about her long-standing experience of being responsible for the internal investigation of cases of sexual harassment in her institution. She has held this position since 2007. Based on this experience, she pointed out the importance of universities' responsibility towards all their members, both legally and ethically.

As an example, she described the procedure to follow in case of harassment at the University of Zurich. First, the affected person gets in touch with the contact person, who will in turn pass on the information to the investigator, Brigitte Tag. At this point, they carry out interviews, collect evidence,

and contact the potential harasser. Depending on the investigation, measures will be taken from a warning to dismissal.

She highlighted the fact that universities' **communication** about sexual harassment is essential. She illustrated her point by mentioning the events, leaflets and campaigns at the University of Zurich on this topic.

She mentioned the difficulty of dealing with increasingly complex cases such as long-term bullying and the difficulty, despite the support of the university, of having **enough resources** to handle these situations.

She concluded with her recommendations, which are having transparent procedures and letting the person affected participate in the decision-making process as far as possible. She also added that it is necessary to be unbiased until the facts are clear and to de-escalate rather than escalate the conflict. She recommended working with trained contact persons and documenting cases properly.

## TELLUS: Breaking the silence around sexual harassment at Lund University through research, integrated support, and open dialogue

Anette Agardh is a professor of Global Health at the University of Lund with a focus on sexual health and rights. She is also leader of the TELLUS project: Sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation at Lund University. She presented the Tellus project that started in 2018. This project was launched after #MeToo and it is a qualitative and quantitative survey studying the prevalence, witnesses, types of harassment, types of perpetrators, where it takes place, and the significance of power. It shows also that harassment is prevalent among students. The results are based on data from surveys, interviews and focus group discussions with employees, doctoral students and students. The publication is available in English.\*



**Man on the left:** How come the university isn't on your case with all this harassment business?

**Man on the right:** The secret: be an excellent researcher who rakes in the cash for the uni, so they can't touch you!

\* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36456935/>

# 1. Institutions' commitment

## Discussion panel

The discussion panel was composed of Brigitte Tag and her assistant Sina Staudinger; Anette Agardh; Brigitte Galliot, Professor of Science and Vice-Rector of the University of Geneva in charge of Human Resources; and Maria Mortensen, Diversity Consultant at the University of Southern Denmark.

Thomas Brage, Professor of Physics at the University of Lund and member of the EDI Policy Group of LERU moderated the panel.

## Quotes from the panel

"I am very surprised how many times people don't visualize how their behaviour is toxic and we have to develop this awareness."

**Brigitte Galliot**

"We should never be confident that everything has already been done to prevent sexual harassment."

"From a legal standpoint, the regulation is the expression of the university's duty of care towards all its members."

"The health of the people that are handling cases of sexual harassment is a topic too, because it's not that easy and you have to be very resilient in this field otherwise you could be in trouble. So, I think it's always necessary to have a supervisor, to have someone to talk to with whom you can discuss different problems that could occur in this field."

**Brigitte Tag**

"It's also important to do the sensibilisation in the sense that people don't feel ashamed that the sexual harassment happened."

**Sina Staudinger**

## Key points

- 1 The duty of universities is to protect their members from a legal and an ethical perspective.
- 2 In order to fulfil this duty, it is essential for universities to give enough financial resources to allow efficient procedures for handling sexual harassment cases within the university.
- 3 These resources should be used to implement transparent and well-documented internal procedures for handling sexual harassment cases in universities; to train contact people, line managers and the administration (differentiating between conflicts and sexual harassment, being unbiased until the facts are clear, developing awareness about toxic behaviours in the workplace, including the person affected in the decision-making process as far as possible etc.) and to communicate and inform about sexual harassment (leaflets, events, campaigns, etc.).
- 4 Finally, because they are indeed universities, it is important to do research on sexual harassment (such as the TELLUS project). To be efficient, indicators with surveys are needed to know in which direction universities must go.



**Poster:** Harassment break the silence

**Man:** Pff! Another women's thing! Always making a fuss about the slightest thing!

# 2. Cost of harassment for universities

The keynote speaker for this topic was Bettina Palazzo, business and ethics consultant, and Senior Lecturer at the University of Geneva's Faculty of Economics.

## The true cost of sexual harassment

**"Sexual harassment is just an element of an overall culture of gender inequality."**  
Bettina Palazzo

When we talk about harassment in the academic world, we must also talk about the cost to the universities. During the conference, Dr Bettina Palazzo talked about what harassment can cause in terms of mental health and energy costs for the victim, but her main point was the cost of sexual harassment for universities and institutions. According to research, there are hidden costs of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The first cost is loss of talent. Victims of sexual harassment with other good opportunities will leave. The results of the same study show that sexual harassment does not only affect the person being harassed but also the people around them. As an example, it can cost \$ 22,500 per person in a team that is infected with sexual harassment. To highlight this waste of money and skills, Dr Palazzo also talked about another study showing that closing the gender gap in STEM by 2050 would lead to an improvement in GDP of € 610 to € 820 billion.

<sup>1</sup> <https://theconversation.com/the-real-cost-of-workplace-sexual-harassment-to-businesses-122107>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/economic-and-financial-affairs/economic-benefits-gender-equality/stem>

## Discussion panel

The discussion panel was comprised of Dr Bettina Palazzo; Verane Achard, doctor at the Geneva University Hospital; Corinne Charbonnel, Professor of Science and mentor at the University of Geneva; Adèle B. Combes, PhD in Neuroscience; Jérôme Lacour, Dean of the Faculty of Science at the University of Geneva and member of the committee that organised the campaign #UNIUNIE against harassment in 2017; Lucile Peytavin, historian and author; and Irène Schmidlin, lawyer.

Brigitte Mantilleri and Klea Faniko moderated the discussion panel.



Document: Bill

Man: Oh, so harassment has a monetary cost? Then we should actually do something!



# 2. Cost of harassment for universities

## Quotes from the panel

“If your hotline doesn’t receive reports, it’s a red flag. It shows that people don’t trust your reporting system.”

“We need laws because otherwise organisations will not do anything, but for the individual person, it is rarely the solution. Before, there should be a lot of opportunities for informal help, because people don’t want someone to get fired. They want to come to work in joy and dignity and want the harassment to end.”

“An important driver is work with colleagues. They are informed, they know what is expected of them, they are trained how to speak up in a peaceful way.”

**Bettina Palazzo**

“We can conclude that it doesn’t mean that all men are delinquent or criminal, but the vast majority of delinquents and criminals are men, and this is true for all ages, all levels of education and all social contexts.”

**Lucile Peytavin**

“Most people I interviewed said that the worst thing was not the violence, was not the harassment, of course it was terrible, but the worst thing was all the people who knew, who saw the abuse, and didn’t do anything.”

**Adèle B. Combes**

“The legal process is difficult, it’s risky, it’s expensive, it’s lonely and it’s often very long.

I am not saying that it shouldn’t be done but it should be done with the knowledge that’s what can happen, and it also leads to the conclusion that other ways of dealing with harassment should be explored and improved.”

**Irène Schmidlin**

“Sexual harassment is a very common phenomenon and also widely underreported. The reason is, I think, the fear of reprisals because academic medicine is an environment where there is a significant power differential and very often your career relies on one person’s decision.”

**Vérane Achard**

“The troublemakers were recidivists, and well-known recidivists. In most of the cases, they were some reports to their colleagues, to their managers, to HR, and very often I found out that the troublemakers were also known internationally for these behaviours so it’s a very high cost for all universities.

So why is it happening again?

And with the same people?”

**Corinne Charbonnel**

“When I started my PhD, I was dreaming of being a scientist, I got up at 2 am sometimes and ran to the lab just because I was excited about what I was doing and we, as supervisors, are responsible for creating this excitement, this joy in a group and everything we heard today is exactly the opposite and cannot be productive.”

**Jérôme Lacour**

## Key points

- 1 There are direct and indirect costs for society from antisocial behaviours of men. These antisocial behaviours include sexual harassment, and this harassment has a cost for universities (talent leak, absenteeism, etc.).
- 2 The academic structure can facilitate harassment because of risk factors such as precarious work contracts and competition. There is an agreement around the table that the costs of harassment are diverse but cost a lot to the institution, for instance talent leak and absenteeism.
- 3 Harassment also costs a lot in terms of mental health and energy costs for the victim. Therefore, the academic world should prevent harassment for example by training employees to speak up.

# 3. Communication and campaign

The keynote speaker for this topic was Brigitte Mantilleri, former Head of the Equality and Diversity Service of the University of Geneva and leader of the campaign #UNIUNIE against harassment.

## How to communicate and break the silence?

**“We broke the silence, and the voices are not going to be shut down anymore.”**  
Brigitte Mantilleri

Brigitte Mantilleri talked about her 12 years' experience as Head of the University of Geneva's Equality Service, and how in 2017 she launched the campaign #UNIUNIE against harassment. This campaign had international success thanks to its visual impact and its straight-to-the-point slogans. She explained that when organising a campaign in the academic world, the target audience is very diverse in terms of age, sex, nationality, and mobility.

In order not to reinforce stereotypes, she chose to focus her campaign on slogans rather than images of victims and perpetrators. The campaign was based on posters posted in university buildings and large coloured stickers on the floor, for example: They also organised conferences and printed



a “Don't Turn a Blind Eye” guide with information on sexual harassment information for potential victims, leaders and witnesses.

## Discussion panel

The discussion panel was composed of Brigitte Mantilleri; Marco Cattaneo, Director of the Communication Office at the University of Geneva; David von Ritter from the Cavalcade marketing agency and partner of the University of Geneva for the campaign #UNIUNIE against harassment; and Morgane Wüthrich, Director of the Equality Office at the University of Neuchâtel.

Kevin Coutinho, Athena Swan Manager at University College London, moderated the discussion panel.



**Woman on the left:** It seems like things are getting better for us in terms of harassment...

**Woman on the right:** Yeah, we're harassed just as much but it actually gets talked about...

# 3. Communication and campaign

## Quotes from the panel

“A campaign should be aimed at everybody: victims, perpetrators, witnesses. It is important to repeat the message and to be straightforward and clear. The whole institution should be part of the campaign.”

“Sexual harassment is not a concept, it's about real people and suffering so it's important to listen to it.”

**Marco Cattaneo**

“Even if you want to do something, it's complicated to convince people who do not want to hear.”

**Brigitte Mantilleri**

“How can we create empathy and make people understand the consequences on lives of what seems like jokes or little gestures?”

**David von Ritter**

“When we do a communication campaign, we need to share all materials and good practice with other universities.”

**Morgane Wüthrich**

## Key points

- 1 Before doing any campaign or project, it is important to know the target audience of the academic world, which is very diverse (age, sex, nationality) and with people coming and going every year or even every semester. It is even more important to get a lot of testimonies within your institution, in order to adapt your communication. So include people top down and bottom up!
- 2 So as not to reinvent the wheel, it is crucial as well to be well informed about the campaigns already implemented internationally.
- 3 In order to build a solid project and to have the deans on your side, it is also useful to have data, statistics and studies available. It is a way to use research to help the field.
- 4 While doing the campaign, use language that is not too complicated or scientific and find partners, for instance a communication agency, that are also interested in the subject.
- 5 Finally, provide with the campaign, tools for protection but also prevention (websites, guides of good practice, guidelines, hotline, confidential help centre independent of the university, etc.).

# 4. Building bridges between field and theory

Two keynote speakers led this topic: First, Isabelle Kraus, Vice-President of Equality at the University of Strasbourg, who shared her experience. Second, Liisa Husu, professor at the University of Örebro, who shared some results of the European research UniSAFE (2021–2024).

## Experience from the field

**“We always say: victims first”**  
Isabelle Kraus

Isabelle Kraus is the Vice-President for Equality and Diversity of the University of Strasbourg. She is in charge of ensuring that each situation of sexual harassment reported to the university is dealt with. In her practice, she faces the inevitable impacts that a case generates. She shared her experience at the University of Strasbourg and mentioned the crucial role of the sexual harassment support unit in accompanying victims. It helps them to overcome their fear of the testimony's consequences and thus limits the still too numerous dropouts of victims during internal investigations.

She highlighted that each case is individual. The discretion required during the investigation is not always respected, causing disruptions that the institution must limit as much as possible in order to protect the victim, the perpetrator, the community, and the progress of the investigation. During that time, the university must ensure a delicate balance between the support and expectations of the victim and the legal rights of the accused person.

## Discussion panel

The discussion panel was composed of Isabelle Kraus; Niels Dupont, Director of STEPS at the University of Geneva; Pete Mandeville, Support Service at the University of Oxford; Patrick Meraldi, Professor at the University of Geneva; Hélène Rey-Hanson, External Harassment Support; Christine Sattiva Spring, lawyer; and Aude Thorel, Director of HR at the University of Geneva.

Karin Gilland Lutz, Equal Opportunity Deputy at the University of Zurich, moderated the discussion panel.



**Man on the left:** *The photocopies aren't ready yet?... You deserve a punishment!...*

**Man on the right:** *Oops!... I see nothing, I hear nothing!*

# 4. Building bridges between field and theory

## Quotes from the panel

“It is not just a university problem, it is a whole society issue.”

“Mandatory consent training is difficult to organise because people who would need it are not showing up. If we want it to work, we should talk about the sanctions if people are not showing up to these mandatory courses.”

**Pete Mandeville**

“The institutions have tendencies to protect themselves. And the victims and the people helping them are seen as troublemakers.”

“Sometimes people don’t realise their status changes. For example, one teaching assistant in his first year was flirting with female students and postdocs. We had an interview with him the next day explaining to him that now he has a position of power, that he is no longer a postdoc and that he is sitting on the PhD committee and in fact he didn’t realise and it never happened again.”

“My hope would be that every new professor would get an education because it’s not a punishment, it’s about learning to effectively lead people.”

**Patrick Meraldi**

## Key points

- 1 As people often stay in academia but their role changes, it is important to give people in new roles a call to explain their new responsibilities and their new position of power over students, in order for them to be competent.
- 2 It was also pointed out that mandatory anti-harassment courses, or consent training, are an interesting option but only if real penalties exist for not attending because usually the people that could benefit from the training do not attend.
- 3 Institutions must pay particular attention to the perpetrator’s return to work after a sentence in order to assure serene working and studying conditions for the future.
- 4 Knowledge of the field comes with experience. It is therefore important to share lessons learned and cases, and to communicate on them to raise awareness.

# 4. Building bridges between field and theory

## How can research help the field?

“What has been not much done in research or in policies is interrogating masculinities and men’s behaviour.”

Liisa Husu

Liisa Husu is a professor at the University of Örebro. She talked about the fact that when she started her studies in the 70s, sexual harassment didn’t even have a name. Since it got a name, it went from an individual problem to a social and organisational concern. She pointed out that research in sexual harassment and sexism boomed, especially in the 2000s. She talked about the research that has been done, what should be done now and which actions could be implemented in the field. This will be found in the key points section. She then presented a project called UniSAFE that aims to map national legislative and policy contexts in Europe, in order to produce recommendations, toolboxes and training for universities, and to empower stakeholders across Europe to implement effective policies.

## Discussion panel

The discussion panel was composed of Liisa Husu; Aya Ezawa, diversity officer at the University of Leiden; Klea Faniko, researcher at the University of Geneva; Louise Carvalho, Diversity & Inclusion Program Leader at CERN; Jadranka Gvozdanović, professor at the University of Heidelberg; and Lorraine Leeson, Ass. Vice Provost EDI at Trinity College.

Eileen Drew, Professor at Trinity College/Lund University moderated the discussion panel.



**Man on the left:** Your dissertation is excellent, very good my dear...but don't you want to take our relationship further?...

**Woman on the right:** But...I...

**Man on the left:** Think about it, it could only be good for your career...

# 4. Building bridges between field and theory

## Quotes from the panel

“It is important to avoid talking to the already converted.”

**Jadranka Gvozdanović**

“There is an illusion of objectivity and fairness in academia which prevents many people from seeing that there is a problem.”

“Women are caught in the (in)visibility paradox: they are invisible for many male colleagues as colleagues, as academics; their work is not interesting for many male colleagues but the sexual harassment indicates that they might get visibility as women in ways that they would prefer not to be visible.”

**Liisa Husu**

“The policy makers should consider research and consult researchers when they design and deliver policies.”

**Klea Faniko**

## Key points

- 1 Contrary to what one might think, much research has been done on sexual harassment and gender-based violence in academia.
- 2 The role of this research is to understand the phenomenon and its dynamics, to understand the specifics of the university context, analyse institutional contexts, to facilitate or prevent sexism and gender-based violence, to analyse the institutional responses and non-responses, to contribute to the design of institutional responses and to understand the gaps and challenges of implementation.
- 3 For example, according to research, people beginning their careers and researchers in precarious positions are especially vulnerable. There are also challenges highlighted by research such as lack of national legislation/policy in some countries, resistance inside universities or society (being labelled troublemakers), lack of trust and fear of retaliation towards institutions, challenging implementation of policies and finally, the fact that sexism is seen as a non-event. Finally, a study shows that the scissors effect in academia might be coming from organisational culture (sexism, lack of support from management or colleagues and negative attitudes toward maternity).
- 4 If we talk about the areas where research should currently be focused, men are in the majority in decision-making positions as well as making up the majority of perpetrators, so research should focus on interrogating masculinities and men's behaviour much more. Also, the issue of mobility of perpetrators within and between institutions and countries is under research and should be focused on. It would also be useful to have longitudinal survey to track the impact of sexual harassment for institutions and for individuals and to have prevalence data on perpetrators.
- 5 As actions in the field, online training on active bystander intervention, and joint events between researchers, practitioners et policy makers should be organised.

# 5. Students' involvement in prevention

For this topic, the participants led the discussion panel as well as participating. The students were Camille Bleeker and Lara Chavaz, co-founders of the campaign Against harassment in the medical environment. We must react. Talk about it! at the University of Geneva; Diane Higelin, member of the feminist students' collective fighting against sexism and sexual harassment (CELVS) at the University of Geneva; Marion Albert and Severine Kidikova, members of the Federation of Students of Alsace at the University of Strasbourg; Tiia Niemi, member of the Student Union at the University of Helsinki and Angèle Gayet-Ageron, professor and co-coordinator of the Medicine, Gender, Equity working group at the University of Geneva.

Giorgia Magni, PhD candidate at the University of Geneva moderated the discussion panel.

## Quotes from the panel

"Three main positive factors [allowed the successful implementation of our initiative]: 1) Support within and outside the Faculty of Medicine; 2) The timing – we were in the post #MeToo period and at a time when universities and enterprises [in Switzerland] were singled out for their management of sexual harassment; 3) Being a student means being rather anonymous, we don't have a contract with the university or with the hospital and this gave us the courage and the freedom to launch such a project."

**Camille Bleeker**

"I would like to share with you an analogy: we are medical students, and we learn that, first of all, when we see a patient, we have to make a diagnosis as we cannot treat someone without really knowing what's happening. And it's the same with sexual harassment: this is a kind of cancer to me. We have to name it, we have to write it down and more than that, we have to put posters everywhere. Like that, people cannot forget that it exists and that it is a big problem!"

**Lara Chavaz**

"[At our university] there were not enough actions that were taken to fight against sexist and sexual violence in students' lives and there were a few cases of sexist and sexual violence that took place in our faculties and associations. That's why we decided to do something."

**Marion Albert**

"Some of the actions were hindered by the fact that current procedures still need to be examined in order to guarantee a safe space because, as one of my colleagues puts it, if the measures are not effective, the power of actions is limited, no matters the quality or quantity of help you may have."

"Health providers...within universities need to stay attentive to what we called the phenomenon of secondary victimisation, a set of negative reactions towards the victim including blame, shaming, hurtful or questionable comments. Such reactions are much more common than you may think... this can have devastating effects on the person who may decide not to ask for help in the future. Hence the necessity of reinforcing knowledge, consciousness, and training in intervention practices."

**Diane Higelin**

"Communication and awareness campaigns on social media on various themes related to gender-based violence worked very well, but students also want more seminars with professionals to raise awareness of the issue of gender-based violence, the care of victims and how to properly redirect them to the appropriate structures. It's very important."

**Severina Kidikova**

"In order to encourage the reporting of harassment, students need to know how their report will be processed and be able to trust that it will be handled properly. There is a need for a clear, step-by-step process that is the same for all cases and that must be communicated to the students throughout their studies."

**Tiia Niemi**

"We need to identify key performance indicators to be able to follow the effects of change and assess change. Various indicators could be proposed like: quantify the number of sexist attitudes and sexual harassment complaints, describe decisions made and actions put in place; we could also assess whether the proportion of women in key leading positions has increased across the years. If we wish to evaluate the impact of our actions regarding the integration of sex and gender in the curriculum, we could report the number of new courses proposed, assess students' satisfaction on this aspect, and report the improvement of students' knowledge on sex and gender."

**Angèle Gayet-Ageron**

## Key points

- 1 Being a student, and therefore not being employed and being more anonymous, allows more freedom to launch campaigns. But institutions should ask themselves about this delegation of competences to students' associations.
- 2 In order to launch a campaign on this subject, it is essential to build a feminist network and to have the support of people within the institution. It is also important to use the power of social media for a communication and awareness campaign targeting students (Instagram, etc.).



**Woman on the left:** Welcome to the world of academia!...

**Woman on the right:** A machete?!...But what for?  
**Woman on the left:** You'll see!



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