
From Margins to Mainstream: Advancing Gender Equality for Young Researchers through Policy, Regulatory Science, and Funding Gateways

Theo Zacharis*¹

¹Greek Scientists Society (GSS) – Grèce

Résumé

Young Researchers and Innovators (YRIs) are essential drivers of Europe's scientific progress, yet many remain on the margins of decision-making and resource allocation—especially women and those from underrepresented groups. Structural barriers, precarious contracts, and fragmented access to funding persist. My intervention addresses how **regulatory science** and **policy reforms**, combined with open access to **funding intelligence**, can catalyse a more inclusive and equitable research ecosystem.

In this presentation, I will outline key policy challenges within the current European research and innovation landscape—particularly those affecting gender equality in academic career progression, participation in high-risk research, and leadership roles. Drawing on the lens of regulatory science, I will discuss how YRIs can be better integrated into science-policy dialogues, influence research standards, and co-develop evidence-based interventions.

Furthermore, I will present the **GSS EU Funding Programmes Gateway** (<https://gss.cost-action.eu/>) - a community-built platform designed to democratise access to EU and international funding calls, with tailored updates for COST Actions, Horizon Europe, ERC, and other schemes. This initiative provides a practical response to one of the core VOICES objectives: empowering YRIs to take ownership of their research careers and navigate funding systems with clarity and confidence.

The session will also highlight actionable recommendations for stakeholders—from funding agencies and universities to COST Actions and national ministries—on how to integrate gender-sensitive practices into proposal evaluations, consortia leadership, and post-award management.

My goal is to offer not just analysis, but concrete tools and entry points for young researchers to engage with policy, secure funding, and strengthen their visibility in the European Research Area, while I will set the landscape to explore post-Action Sustainability Initiatives with VOICE COST Action.

*Intervenant