HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Gender Equality Plan for the Institute of Political Studies of the PAS for 2025–2027

Introduction

This Gender Equality Plan for the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IPS PAS) for 2025–2027 sets out the commitments arising from the Institute's adoption of the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, as part of the process of renewing the HR Excellence in Research award, which was granted to the IPS PAS in July 2022.

1. Diagnosis

The diagnosis of the current state of gender equality at the Institute of Political Studies of the PAS was carried out between early May and late June 2025. It comprised the following elements: analysis of aggregated personnel data provided by the Human Resources Department of the IPS PAS, a review of the Institute's internal regulations and documents, and the results of a survey conducted among the Institute's employees between 5 and 14 May 2025. The anonymous online survey examined several issues related to equality at the IPS PAS, including the possibility of combining professional work with family life, opinions on the representation of underrepresented groups (women and junior researchers) in the Institute's decision-making bodies, perceptions of equal treatment in specific areas, and opinions on the mechanism for combating discrimination and mobbing at the Institute. The survey was completed by 50.5% of the Institute's employees. Women accounted for approximately one-third (34.1%) of respondents, which roughly corresponds to the gender ratio among all employees of the IPS PAS.

1.1. Staffing by Gender

As of 30 April 2025, the IPS PAS employed 92 people, of whom 38.1% were women (an increase of 1.1 percentage points in female employment compared to 2022) and 61.9% were men. Women continue to predominate in administrative positions (a total of 20 full-time positions), accounting for 65% of this category of employees, although compared to 2022, there has been a slight increase (5 percentage points) in the employment of men in this category. Seventy-two people were employed in research positions, including 30.6% women and 69.4% men. Compared to 2022, there has been a slight increase in the employment of women in research positions (1.6 percentage points). The data on the gender structure of employment among administrative and research staff at the Institute show a modest but noticeable increase in the employment of categories that have been underrepresented in each group for years. These changes can therefore be interpreted as a significant step toward the Institute's implementation of the principle of more gender-balanced employment among both administrative and research staff.

Personnel data indicate that the Institute is a stable workplace. Both in 2022 and currently, no significant gender disparities were found in the analysis of employment type. As of 30 April 2025, all IPS PAS employees were engaged exclusively on the basis of employment contracts, with the vast majority, 88% (including 82.8% of women and 91.2% of men), on permanent contracts, which are widely recognized as the most stable form of employment. A small proportion of employees—11.9% (including 17.1% of women and 8.8% of men)—were employed on permanent contracts. More than three-quarters (78.3%) of employees, including 71.4% of women and 82.5% of men, had been employed at the Institute for more than five years.

However, further analysis of personnel data indicated that differences in the representation of women and men in scientific disciplines and corresponding departments remained. These data show that the gender imbalance at the IPS PAS is determined more by scientific discipline than by institutional setting. Among researchers whose primary discipline is history, men accounted for 82.3%. A more balanced gender representation is apparent in political science and administration, as well as in sociology. In both of these disciplines, women accounted for 44.4% and 36.4% of employees, respectively, at the end of April 2025.

The interdisciplinary nature of the departments somewhat mitigates the gender imbalances in individual departments, although significant differences between departments remain in terms of gender structure. For example, women predominate in the Department of International Organisations and Global Security (7 women and 3 men), while in the Department of Elites and Institutions of Power, there is balanced gender representation (7 women and 6 men). In both departments, women hold managerial positions. In contrast, men predominate in the other departments. Compared to 2022, it is significant that there is currently no department at the IPS PAS where no women are employed (in 2022, two of the eight departments at the Institute did not employ women).

1.2. Gender Balance in Decision-Making Bodies

Improving the indicators of formal representation of women at the Institute in 2023–2025 (see Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan for the IPS PAS for 2023–2024) responded to the need expressed by more than half (54%) of female employees in the 2022 employee survey.

At the same time, however, the May 2025 survey showed that the demand to strengthen the formal representation of women at the Institute remains unmet: this demand was expressed by 45.6% of all employees, including 78.6% of women who responded to this question.

1.3. Equality in Recruitment and Career Development

1.3.1. Gender

According to the results of the May 2025 survey, employees, including women, believe that the Institute provides them with equal opportunity in the recruitment process and at stages of academic career development. The percentage of women who considered that the Institute

guarantees them equal opportunity in the recruitment process and academic promotions was 78.6% (compared to 88.2% of men). Even more women (85.7%) believed that the Institute provides equal access to research funding, and the same percentage believed in equal representation of women in decision-making bodies (this opinion was expressed by 88.2% of male respondents regarding access to research funding and 76.5% of men regarding formal representation).

On the other hand, when asked whether the Institute needs to strengthen the formal representation of women (e.g., on the Scientific Council), more than three-quarters (78.6%) of women answered in the affirmative (for comparison: 17.6% of male respondents answered affirmatively to this question, and 45.6% of respondents overall gave this answer).

Furthermore, as shown in the Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan for the IPS PAS for 2023–2024, despite the improvement in the representation of women among researchers at higher levels of academic seniority (associate professors and full professors), the Institute still has disparities in the employment of researchers based on gender and academic hierarchy. These disparities continue to increase higher up the academic hierarchy (lower among junior researchers, higher among senior researchers, with the highest disparity among full professors).

1.3.2. Academic Upward Mobility (Junior and Senior Academic Staff)

Given that remaining at lower levels of the academic career ladder (before habilitation) is usually associated with a more difficult professional situation in various respects, including limited freedom in career planning and limited development opportunities, which may influence the decision to leave academia,[1] in the 2025 survey, it was decided to examine this category of employees more closely in relation to selected issues. This was important because junior researchers—that is, those without a habilitation or professorship—account for more than half (56.9%) of all researchers at the Institute, including 59.1% of women employed in research positions.

Analysis of the survey data showed that, in general, junior researchers at the IPS PAS feel that the Institute provides equal opportunity to its employees in all four areas examined. 95.5% of assistants and assistant professors felt that the Institute provides equal opportunity for employees in recruitment processes (in comparison, 70.6% of senior researchers agreed with this opinion). 90.1% of junior researchers considered that equal opportunity was guaranteed in terms of access to funds for conducting scientific research (compared to 88.2% of senior researchers who agreed with this opinion). 95.5% of assistants and assistant professors declared that they felt the Institute provided employees with equal opportunity for academic upward mobility (in comparison: 88.3% of senior researchers shared this opinion). In turn, 81.8% of assistants and assistant professors felt that the Institute provides equal opportunity

[1] On the situation of young researchers, see, for example, Jasiński, A., Witkowska-Piłaszewicz, O., Pruś, J. (2025) *Factors Influencing the Intention to Leave Work Among Young Researchers in Poland*. Report of the Council of Young Researchers, available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GGTOlAKORqlTl7BXPOEyBtzMahoG1lYx/view (accessed 30 June 2025).

for employees in terms of representation in decision-making bodies (76.5% of senior researchers declared this perception).

However, the perception that the Institute provides employees with equal opportunity in terms of representation in decision-making bodies was not correlated among junior employees with satisfaction regarding the actual representation of this group (for comparison: the demand for additional representation of junior researchers was expressed by 56.5% of all respondents, which was 8.5 percentage points higher than in 2022). On the contrary, as many as 81.8% of assistants and assistant professors expressed a demand to strengthen the formal representation of this group, e.g., in the Scientific Council. Furthermore, more than half (54.5%) of the doctoral students who participated in the survey indicated explicitly that this group needs to strengthen its formal representation in the Scientific Council.

It is therefore clear that junior researchers are a group within the IPS PAS who declare significant freedom in choosing their research topics (all respondents from this group agreed with this statement), recognize that the Institute provides its employees with good conditions for professional development (15 of 17 respondents agreed with this opinion), and feel that the Institute provides employees with equal opportunities in various areas (as analyzed above), but at the same time express a demand to strengthen their formal representation on the Scientific Council.

1.3.3. Age (Employees of Retirement Age)

According to personnel data at the end of April 2025, the IPS PAS employed 7 people of retirement age in research positions, and by 2027, another 6 people employed in research positions will reach retirement age at the Institute. The average age of the Institute's employees is currently 49 years.

Given this age structure, it seems reasonable to take measures to strengthen the position of people of retirement age, especially researchers, to prevent their professional and social exclusion and to make use of their undoubted intellectual potential and professional experience, from which younger researchers will be able to benefit.

1.4. Organisational Culture and Work-Life Balance

The results of the survey conducted in May 2025 showed that the Institute's employees perceive it as a family-friendly workplace. This is due to the fact that the Institute has introduced mechanisms to harmonize work-life balance, which have been used by employees. These mechanisms included: changing the start or end time of work due to family and care responsibilities (used by 30.4% of respondents), access to library resources from home computers (58.7% of respondents) and, in principle, the widespread use by employees of the possibility of dealing with certain employee matters via email and performing professional duties remotely (91.3% of respondents indicated both mechanisms). Among the mechanisms to harmonize work-life balance available at the Institute, the least frequently used was the possibility of proportionally reducing the required number of points in the periodic

assessment of employees who, during the reporting period, took advantage of the statutory breaks related to the birth and upbringing of a child (6.5% of respondents). The relatively small percentage of people using this mechanism, compared to other mechanisms, can be explained by the employment structure at the Institute, mainly related to the age and gender of employees.[2]

It should be emphasized that the possibility of a proportional reduction in the number of points required for employees returning from parental leave was introduced at the Institute in response to their requests, as reported in the 2022 survey. Despite the relatively short period of time that this regulation has been in force, it has been noticed and appreciated by employees in the current survey. In their free comments, employees expressed the opinion that this is a mechanism that genuinely supports the academic career development of women returning to work after the birth of a child, alleviating the stress associated with their new family and professional situation.

It is noteworthy that in the May 2025 survey, all respondents expressed the opinion that the current mechanisms to harmonize work-life balance meet their needs (exactly half of the respondents chose the highest answer on the scale, i.e., "definitely true," and this answer was chosen twice as often by women as by men). The unequivocally positive assessment of the current mechanisms therefore explains the lack of specific additional mechanisms that the respondents expected in terms of improving work-life balance at the Institute (apart from one mention of a demand to promote online staff meetings and one indication of a demand to increase salaries, which, however, results primarily from scientific policy rather than the Institute's internal regulations).

The May 2025 survey thus confirmed that, in the opinion of employees, the Institute supports the harmonization of work and family life during the difficult period after parents return from statutory leave related to the birth of a child. Simultaneously, in their free comments, employees suggested extending mechanisms that facilitate the harmonization of family and professional responsibilities to parents raising older children and to those caring for other dependent family members, such as persons with disabilities.

1.5. Mechanisms to Combat Harassment at the IPS PAS

The results of the survey showed that employees' knowledge of the regulations that constitute the mechanism to combat harassment at the IPS PAS varies. Employees are clearly more familiar with the provisions of the *Regulations for Combating Discrimination and Mobbing at the IPS PAS* than with the *Internal Reporting Regulations*. The percentage of people declaring good knowledge of anti-mobbing regulations was 63%, and 22% with regard to the regulations concerning internal reporting; in turn, the percentage of respondents indicating poor knowledge of anti-mobbing regulations was 33%, and of regulations concerning internal reporting 42%. The most significant differences concern the percentage of people declaring a

[2] Staff data confirm that in 2023–2025, only 5.5% of all researchers at the Institute took statutory leave related to the birth of a child.

lack of knowledge of both regulations: in the case of anti-mobbing regulations, it was 5% of respondents, and in the case of regulations concerning internal reporting, it was 37%.

In order to strengthen equality measures at the Institute, including those identified in the previous survey as necessary to prevent harassment in the workplace, on 2 November 2024, the Director of the IPS PAS appointed an Equal Opportunity Officer. The current survey showed that almost three-quarters (73.9%) of respondents assessed this fact positively, including more than half of the respondents (52.2%) as "definitely positively" and almost one in five (21.7%) as "rather positively." Simultaneously, one in five (19.6%) respondents did not assess the appointment of the Equal Opportunity Officer either positively or negatively, which may be related to the short period of time between the appointment of the Officer and the survey (approximately six months). 4.4% of respondents assessed the appointment of the Equal Opportunity Officer negatively (2.2% as "rather negative" and 2.2% as "definitely negative"). The percentage of people who declared that they were unaware of the appointment of an Equal Opportunity Officer at the Institute is within the margin of statistical error (2.2%).

In light of the survey results, it can be concluded that employees not only demonstrate good knowledge of the fact that the Director of the IPS PAS appointed an Equal Opportunity Officer, but also correctly identify this function with its scope of activity. When asked to whom cases of mobbing, discrimination, and harassment should be reported at the Institute, over 42% of respondents gave the correct answer, indicating only the Equal Opportunity Officer (18 responses). Other responses included: the Equal Opportunity Officer in conjunction with the Institute's management or the department supervisor/head (6 responses), only the Institute's management (3 responses), the Institute's management in conjunction with the supervisor/head (3 responses), the disciplinary committee of the Scientific Council (exclusively or in conjunction with the Institute's management—2 responses), only the head of the department (1 response), an employee representative (1 response), a legal advisor (1 response), an ombudsman (1 response), and the option "other," including "I don't know" (10 responses).

On the other hand, slightly less than two-thirds of incorrect indications of the person/body to whom cases of unequal treatment at the Institute should be reported, or declarations of lack of knowledge in this regard, clearly indicate the need to take action to increase employees' knowledge of the proper referral of specific cases to the authorities that handle them. This is important because the previous survey in 2022 already pointed to problems with identifying the persons or bodies to whom cases of unequal treatment should be reported.[3]

Furthermore, the regulations concerning the handling of cases of abuse and violations of general law, contained in the *Internal Reporting Regulations* (so-called whistleblowers), were among the regulations least known to the Institute's employees. It should be noted that not only did a relatively small percentage of respondents declare knowledge of these regulations,

[3] It should be noted that in the 2022 study, cases of harassment were identified mainly in the context of gender equality, while the current study took a broader view of the issue of equality violations. Above all, however, the 2022 study was conducted before the Director of the Institute appointed an Equal Opportunity Officer.

but this knowledge was more often described as "poor" than "good," and the percentage of people declaring a lack of knowledge in this area was the second highest among all areas covered by the survey.

Poor knowledge of internal regulations concerning whistleblowers was confirmed in the respondents' answers when they were asked to independently indicate (in an open question) the person/body competent to handle cases of serious abuse and violations of general law. Among the responses, there were only 5 correct indications of the internal reporting coordinator (or the legal advisor performing this function at the Institute), and the majority of the indications (89%) concerned other persons/bodies (mainly the Institute's management).

2. Objectives, Actions, and Indicators

Based on the diagnosis, and taking into account the specific conditions and needs of the Institute and the opinions of employees expressed in the May 2025 survey, five key objectives of the Gender Equality Plan for the IPS PAS for 2025–2027 were identified:

1. further increasing gender balance in decision-making bodies and strengthening the representation of non-independent researchers in decision-making bodies;
2. further supporting gender equality and equal opportunity in academic upward mobility in the recruitment and career development process;
3. extending measures to promote work-life balance to employee groups other than parents returning to the labor market after breaks related to childbirth/child-rearing;
4. strengthening the position of researchers who are retiring;
5. disseminating knowledge among employees about the mechanisms for combating discrimination and mobbing.

Objective 1. Further Increase of the Gender Balance in Decision-Making Bodies and Strengthening the Representation of Junior Researchers in Decision-Making Bodies

Although the representation of women on the Scientific Council of the IPS PAS has improved significantly compared to 2022, a woman has joined the management team, and women are now employed in all departments, the demand to strengthen the representation of women in the Institute's decision-making bodies has not yet been satisfied. However, women still represent a small percentage of department heads, managing two out of eight departments at the IPS PAS (25%).

The second group of employees whose demand for representation was highlighted in the May 2025 survey are junior researchers. This group accounts for more than half (56.9%) of all researchers at the Institute, including 59.1% of women employed in research positions.

With a view to improving the gender balance in decision-making bodies, including strengthening the participation of women as heads of departments, and in order to

strengthen the formal representation of junior researchers, the IPS PAS will undertake the measures listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Activities of the IPS PAS aimed at achieving GEP Objective 1 for 2025–2027

Action	Target Groups	Indicators	Responsible Entities	Implementation Period
Ensuring balanced gender representation in management teams	Women employed in scientific positions at the IPS PAS	Representation of women in management teams reflecting the employment structure (38% in 2025)	Director, Deputy Director for Research, Deputy Director for Research Evaluation and Dissemination	On an ongoing basis
Strengthening the representation of junior researchers by introducing changes to the Statutes of the IPS PAS	Junior researchers (assistants and assistant professors), including women in junior research positions	Increasing the representation of junior researchers on the Scientific Council	Director, Deputy Director for Research, Deputy Director for Research Evaluation and Dissemination, Scientific Council of the 10th term (2023–2026)	From the elections of the Scientific Council of the 11th term (2027–2030)

Source: own study.

Objective 2. Further Supporting Gender Equality and Equal Opportunity in Academic Upward Mobility in the Recruitment and Career Development Process

The diagnosis showed that despite an improvement in indicators compared to 2022, women are still underrepresented in senior academic positions, as well as in certain academic disciplines, especially history.

Therefore, in 2025–2027, the IPS PAS will continue to carry out activities aimed at supporting women in the recruitment process and in the further stages of their academic careers.

Table 2. Activities of the IPS PAS aimed at achieving GEP Objective 2 for 2025–2027

Action	Target Audience	Indicators	Responsible Units	Implementation Period
Actively encouraging women to apply for research positions at the Institute	Female researchers conducting research in disciplines represented at the IPS PAS	Promotion of job advertisements in female researcher networks	Deputy Director for Research, Human Resources Department, Equal Opportunity Officer	On an ongoing basis, from 1 January 2025
Promoting balanced gender representation in departments and disciplines by hiring women when candidates have equivalent competences	Male and female candidates for research positions at the IPS PAS	Promoting job advertisements in female researcher networks Raising awareness among department heads that women are underrepresented at the IPS PAS	Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs, Competition committees, Department heads	On an ongoing basis, from 1 January 2025

Source: own study.

Objective 3. Extending Measures to Promote Work-Life Balance to Employee Groups Other Than Parents Returning to the Labor Market After Breaks Related to Childbirth/Child-Rearing

The diagnosis revealed the need to include groups other than parents returning to work after a break related to the birth and upbringing of a child (after maternity and parental leave) in measures aimed at maintaining work-life balance. In the survey conducted in May 2025, employees indicated that such measures should cover persons caring for other dependents in their households, such as children over 1 year of age and persons with disabilities. Taking action in this area seems justified in the context of achieving the objectives described above, in particular preventing the loss of female talent (keeping women at lower levels of their academic careers) and building a more balanced gender representation at the Institute.

Table 3. Activities of the IPS PAS aimed at achieving GEP Objective 3 for 2025–2027

Action	Target Audience	Indicators	Responsible Units	Implementation Period
Development and implementation of a comprehensive remote working system	Employees of the IPS PAS	Development and implementation of remote working regulations (introduction of "remote working on request" for employees in specific life/family situations, such as raising persons with disabilities, children under 4 years of age, children with special educational needs, pregnant employees)	Director, Legal Advisor, Human Resources Department, Equal Opportunity Officer	Entry into force of the relevant Director's decree by the end of 2025

Source: own study.

Objective 4. Strengthening the Position of Researchers Who Are Retiring

The diagnosis showed a significant contribution to the Institute's activities by employees of retirement age (including those employed in research positions). Furthermore, it is assumed that the age structure of the Institute's employees will not change significantly in the coming years. Therefore, in recognition of their scientific and organizational contributions to the Institute and in order to prevent the loss of experienced researchers after their retirement, it seems reasonable for the Institute to take measures to strengthen this group.

To this end, appropriate internal regulations will be introduced (enabling the status of professor emeritus of the IPS PAS to be obtained), which will allow retired researchers of the Institute to continue to participate in the scientific life of the institution. The status of professor emeritus of the IPS PAS will be an honorary title, ensuring the possibility of further cooperation with the Institute, representing it (retaining affiliation), and guaranteeing the possibility of using the resources at the disposal of the IPS PAS.

Table 4. Activities of the IPS PAS aimed at achieving GEP Objective 4 for 2025–2027

Action	Addressees	Indicators	Responsible Units	Implementation Period
Introduction of the status of "professor	IPS PAS employees, especially those	Development and implementation of an appropriate decree by	Director of IPS PAS, Legal Advisor, Equal	Entry into force of the relevant decree of the

Action	Addressees	Indicators	Responsible Units	Implementation Period
emeritus of the IPS PAS"	of retirement age	the Director of the IPS PAS	Opportunity Officer	Director by the end of 2025

Source: own study.

Objective 5. Disseminating Knowledge Among Employees About the Mechanisms for Combating Discrimination and Mobbing

The diagnosis showed that the Institute's employees' knowledge of the mechanisms for combating discrimination and mobbing is fragmented, which applies in particular to the correct identification by employees of the persons/bodies responsible for handling cases in this area.

Therefore, it seems reasonable for the Institute to take measures to disseminate this knowledge among IPS PAS employees.

Table 5. Activities of the IPS PAS aimed at achieving GEP Objective 5 for 2025–2027

Action	Addressees	Indicators	Responsible Entities	Implementation Period
Dissemination of knowledge about the system of solutions for counteracting discrimination and mobbing among IPS employees	IPS PAS employees	Information sent to IPS employees	Equal Opportunity Officer	Fourth quarter of 2025

Source: own study.

Resources and Implementation of the Gender Equality Plan for the IPS PAS for 2025–2027

The Gender Equality Plan for the Institute of Political Studies of the PAS for 2025–2027 is a joint commitment of the Institute's community, expressed in the form of a resolution of the Scientific Council of the IPS PAS, to be adopted by the end of 2024. Thus, the Council obliges the Director of the Institute and his subordinate organizational units to implement the measures provided for in the Plan and undertakes to monitor the implementation of the objectives set out in Section 2 of this Plan.

The Gender Equality Plan for the IPS PAS for 2025–2027 will be published on the Institute's website and distributed to employees via email.

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

The Scientific Council of the IPS PAS will issue an opinion on the report on the implementation of the Plan for 2025–2027, presented by the Equal Opportunity Officer no later than by the end of June 2028.

Prepared by: Equal Opportunity Officer

Dr Anna Ciepielewska-Kowalik, Professor at the IPS PAS

In cooperation with:

Dr Ireneusz Sadowski, Professor at the IPS PAS

Ewa Snopkiewicz, MA

Izabela Klatt-Łuszkiewicz, MA

July 2025