



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI

The European Commission honours the URV with the EU Gender Equality Champions award

The award recognises the University for its high level of achievement through the implementation of its equality plans



Josep Pallarès receives the 'Sustainable Gender Equality Champion' award from European Commissioner Iliana Ivanova during an event at the European Commission headquarters. PHOTO: Frédéric Sierakowski, European Union, 2024.

The European Commission has honoured the Universitat Rovira i Virgili with the EU Award for Gender Equality Champions, in the category that evaluates the results obtained through the gender equality plans implemented by European academic and research institutions. The prize is endowed with 100,000 euros, which allows winning institutions to strengthen their Equality Plans, an essential requirement for universities and research centres



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wishing to participate in the competitive calls for research funding of the Horizon Europe programme.

Together with the French National Centre for Scientific Research the URV won the award in the category "Sustainable Gender Equality Champions", for which ten research institutions had put themselves forward. The Technological University of the Shannon (Ireland) was also recognised in the category "Newcomer Gender Equality Champions".



Officials from Technological University of the Shannon (Ireland), the French National Centre for Scientific Research and the URV (Josep Pallarès and Iolanda Tortajada) with Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. PHOTO: Frédéric Sierakowski, European Union, 2024.

The award was presented to the Rector of the URV, Josep Pallarès, by the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Iliana Ivanova, during a ceremony at the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels. Pallarès, who was present at the event with the Vice-Rector for Academic Policy and Quality, Iolanda Tortajada, remarked that this award "is the result of a collective effort".

The URV has received the award for its long-standing and sustained efforts to promote equality between men and women and for the high level of equality that it has achieved through its equality plans. In particular, the award recognises the results of the URV's second Equality Plan, implemented from 2011 to 2019, and the University's commitment to its third Equality Plan (2020-2024).



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In fact, the University has been a pioneer in Spain in this context after the publication of its first report on inequalities between men and women at the institution directly led it to approve its first Equality Plan in 2007. It then created the Equality Observatory to ensure the sustainability of its equality policies and to transfer knowledge to society, all under the direction of Professor Inma Pastor and the impetus of the team led by former Rector Francesc Xavier Grau.

In 2020, the URV reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality with the creation of its Equality Unit, which is responsible for designing, implementing and evaluating the current Equality Plan and for organising training, raising awareness, collecting data and providing support for the equality councils at all its facilities.



During the Gender Equality Champions award ceremony. PHOTO: Frédéric Sierakowski, European Union, 2024.

Cilia Willem, director of the URV's Equality Unit, gave a positive assessment of the award and said, as did the rector at the award-giving ceremony, that "although there is still work to be done, such as reducing the pay gap and



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increasing the number of women in senior management, the impact of the URV's gender equality policies is guaranteed by its firm and long-term institutional commitment through its Equality Unit". Willem asserted that the "sustained effort in the field of gender equality has facilitated gender balance among students and staff and the approval of protocols against sexual harassment".

The Equality Unit," said Willem, "is working to ensure that the University is a safe space free of gender violence and as such it is already preparing its fourth Equality Plan, in collaboration with its students, staff and social partners, which is to come into force in 2025". She concludes that "public universities have a duty not only to reflect society, but also to lead change".



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