

Tuesday morning keynotes: Power Dynamics, Tuesday, Sep 23 2025, 9:30-11:00

Location: Main Hall

Session: Keynote Lectures

Chair: Vesna Leskošek

KY-01

Leadership, Courage, and Responsibility: Addressing Gender-Based Violence as a Matter of Research Integrity

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Gender-based violence in research and academia is not only a violation of human rights—it is also a fundamental breach of research integrity. It undermines the principles of fairness, safety, accountability, and trust that are essential to responsible research environments. Yet institutional responses to gender-based violence often fall short, particularly when they prioritise reputation management over justice, fail to act on reports, or disregard the needs of those affected. These failures constitute what scholars have termed institutional betrayal—the harm that institutions inflict when they fail to protect those who depend on them.

This presentation addresses institutional responsibility for tackling gender-based violence within the framework of research integrity, drawing on insights from the Horizon Europe project GenderSAFE. The project's findings reveal the systemic and multi-level nature of institutional failures in addressing gender-based violence, including the absence of transparent procedures, weak accountability mechanisms, and a lack of protection from retaliation. Such shortcomings not only harm individuals, particularly those from minoritised groups, but also perpetuate unsafe and unequal research environments.

To move forward, institutions need more than formal policies—they need institutional courage: the proactive commitment to confront harm, support those affected, and uphold the values they profess. This requires strong, ethical leadership and a shift in institutional cultures toward accountability, care, and equity. In this context, research integrity officers and practitioners have a key role to play, even if gender-based violence may not yet be seen as part of their remit. The keynote will explore how their role could evolve in relation to institutional efforts on gender-based violence, and how these efforts intersect with broader integrity challenges, including whistleblower protection, academic freedom, and non-discrimination. The presentation will offer a constructive reflection on the barriers and opportunities for embedding gender-based violence prevention and response into institutional research integrity frameworks. It will propose key principles and practical actions for institutions seeking to align their values with practice, anchored in transparency, inclusivity, and the voices of those most affected.

Ultimately, fostering research integrity requires more than compliance: it requires courage, responsibility, and leadership at all levels.