



equal minds, equal code

FORTH-ICS steps to
inclusive computer science

MAGDALINI CHATZAKI

DEPT. OF SYSTEMS & NETWORKS

FORTH-ICS

CS MSC, GEAC-FORTH MEMBER



FORTH Gender Equality & anti-Discrimination Committee

set up in 2018, in 2021 with extended synthesis

- develop a research & work environment respecting gender equality, promoting excellence through diversity and demonstrating zero tolerance to any discrimination or prejudice based on gender
- compile and follow up Gender Equality Plan
- standardize collection and analysis of quantitative & qualitative data
- systematic monitoring that we keep on the right track
- formulate a framework for complaint submission, management & resolution
- improving career development processes
- promoting work-life balance
- organize raising awareness actions for personnel & community



mind the gap in ICT – is it important or not?

equality and non-discrimination (gender included) are fundamental human rights

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948)-article 1, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015)-Goal 5, European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) – Article 14)

shortage of approx. 1.4M ICT specialists by 2030 in EU

(ref: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/europes-digital-decade>, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-skills-initiatives>)

shortage of approx. 7.5K/year ICT specialists until 2030 in Greece

(ref: https://www.sepe.gr/files/pdf/sepe_deloitte_ict_gap_study_english.pdf)

women represent approx. 19.4% of the ICT workforce in EU

(ref: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=ICT_specialists_in_employment#ICT_specialists_by_sex)

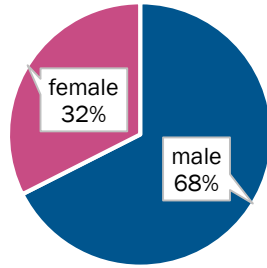
women represent approx. 19.8% of the ICT workforce in Greece

(ref: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=ICT_specialists_in_employment#ICT_specialists_by_sex)

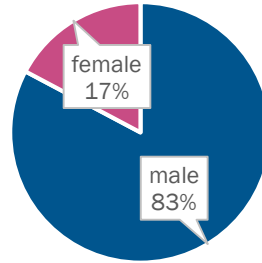


some numbers for FORTH-ICS

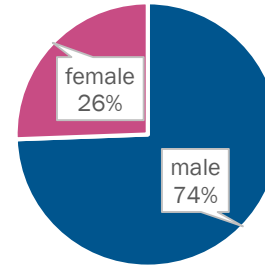
all of us @ICS



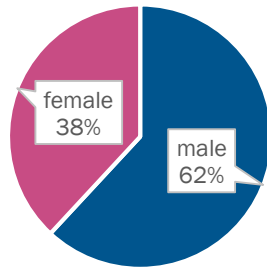
researchers&faculty



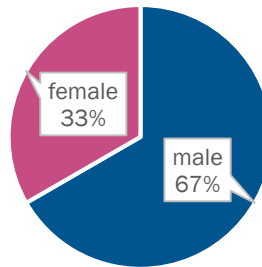
Scholars



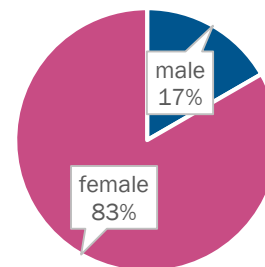
in contract



scientific&technical in contract



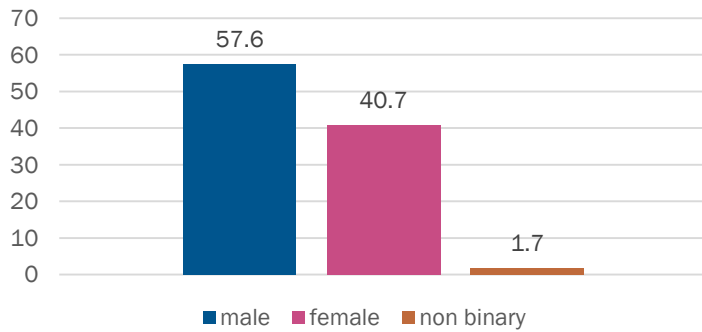
administration in contract



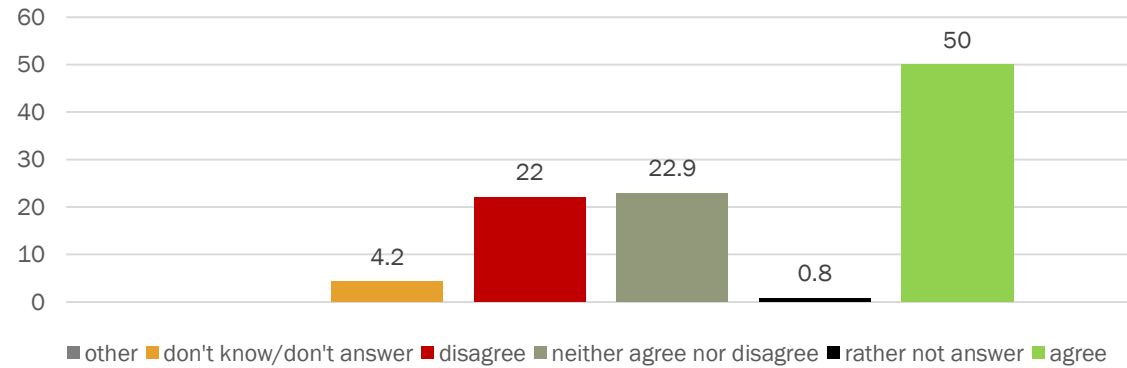


some opinions for FORTH-ICS (118 of 501 (23.5%), summer 2022)

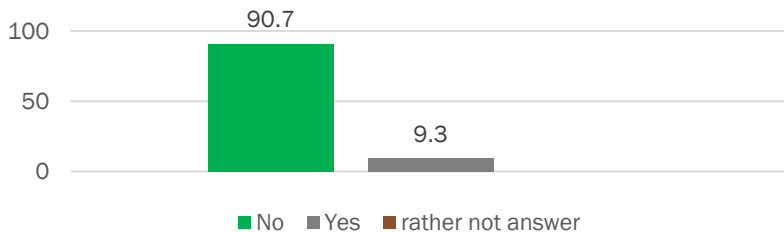
male/female/nonbinary



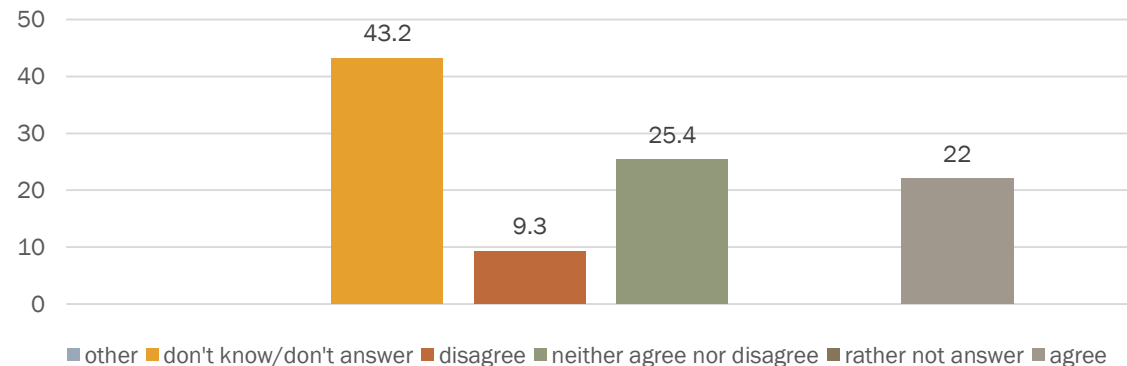
are male and female treated equally?



have you personally experienced harassment and/or bullying related to your gender or sexual orientation within FORTH?



Does FORTH respond to concerns about gender equality?





some questions to consider

technological innovation – flagship for our societies

- by whom are digital systems designed and for whom?
- under whose values and for whose interest?

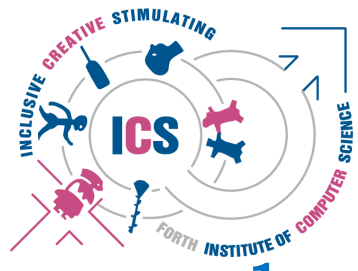
is the neutrality of digital artefacts questionable?

- are digital systems inclusive by design?
- how could they, since the design teams are not inclusive?
- are there ways to pinpoint, isolate and eliminate “gender or other discrimination bugs” during the design phase?

women are underrepresented in the Computer Science field

- true worldwide (declining trend)
- what is the relation of this asymmetry with the social consequences of the digital transformation?

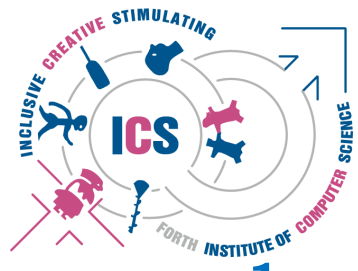
could digital transformation re-enforce discriminations?



how to step forward

3 strategic approaches (EU suggests)

- “fix the numbers”
 - increasing women’ s and underrepresented groups’ participation
- “fix the institutions”
 - promote inclusivity in carriers
- “fix the knowledge”
 - stimulate excellence by integrating gender and intersectional analysis in research



how we step forward

guidelines, roadmaps, policies

- follow European guidelines
- be part of the Gender Equality anti Discrimination Committee of FORTH
 - Gender Equality Plan, gender inclusive workplace and other activities
- survey on good practices and learn from the achievers

enrich our research with diversity, equity, inclusivity values (interdisciplinary)

- a great example: <https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/>

education and raising awareness actions

- work towards a more gender friendly computer science field
- train more social/gender sensitive computer scientists
- empower females in the field
- encourage girls to follow the field
- promote inspiring role models beyond the “smart and nerd” one



our baby steps

(2019-) Prof. P. Faturu: WISTEM 2019, leading the Greek ACM-W Chapter

(April 2022) FORTH Gender Equality&anti-Discrimination Committee initiated the Greek Network of Gender Equality and anti-Discrimination Committees in Research Centers and Independent Research Institutes (national-wide action)

(2021-2024) community raising awareness events by the FORTH Gender Equality&anti-Discrimination Committee

(July 2023): workshop: considerations on Horizon Europe gender sensitive research @FORTH

(Sept. 2024): intervention on the Researcher's Night: Mind the Gender Gap in Computer Science poster

(Nov. 2024): 2 policy papers initiated by ICS ERA Chair Prof. A. Stamatakis and other highly qualified Scientists@FORTH

<https://www.biocomp.gr/assets/downloads/femaleProfessors.pdf>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/political-science/articles/10.3389/fpos.2024.1471002/full>

(Feb. 2025): workshop: Gender Issues in Computer Science



what could we do next?

analyze and report quantitative & qualitative data

motivate the sc to setup policies for “fixing the numbers” & “fixing the institution”

set up a discussion group to motivate our researchers for “fixing the knowledge”

design a mentoring program for improving carrier development skills

motivate the management to support work life balance infrastructures

work closely with allies European and nationally wide



equal minds, equal code

Thank you,

Magdalini Chatzaki

Dept. of Systems and Networks

FORTH-ICS

magda@ics.forth.gr