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**Centro Euro-Mediterraneo
sui Cambiamenti Climatici**

GUIDELINES FOR A "BROAD" LANGUAGE

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Premise

The language and words we use have always been useful to humanity. We use them to describe the world around us, nature and the living beings that populate it, as well as the relations between multiple subjects. As such, language has the power to reveal the existence of worlds and even create new ones. By its very nature language is alive - evolving together with communities of people that speak and write - and reflects changes in society.

For this reason, it is important that there is awareness of how we use language in working environments, especially in those that are characterized by diversity.

We chose the expression "broad language", rather than "inclusive", because breadth allows us to widen the circle within which relationships are created, whereas inclusiveness implies proceeding by absorbing subsets into it. Thus, by adopting a broad language, we can respect diversity and reduce the use of labels. Non-exclusive and broad language puts people at the centre, showing care and valuing differences.

The following guidelines further contribute to the path traced by the CMCC with the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and aim to accompany daily relations in the working environments both within and around the Foundation.

Giving value to diversity

The guidelines on broad language start from a concrete application of the GEP and broaden its scope, following that principle of extension which does not aim to delimit and categorize but rather seeks to broaden horizons by going beyond differences, starting from those of gender.

Even at an institutional level, with reference to the reality in which CMCC operates, we find confirmation of a now codified and increasingly vast concept, such as for example in the European Union Framework Program for research and innovation "Horizon Europe" in which the concept of "Gender Plus" is introduced. The Horizon Europe Guidelines on Gender Equality Plans (GEP) invite us to take into account "*differences between women and men based on other individual or group characteristics [...], such as people with a migrant or minority background, people with disabilities, people with a low socio-economic status or at risk of poverty, members of the LGBTIQ community*," in order to "*explore the intersection of gender with other characteristics and potential reasons for discrimination (also known as "gender plus ") which may highlight specific areas that require attention*."

The concept of Gender Plus, through intersectional analysis, connects the element of gender with those of age, origin, sexual orientation, socio-economic condition, disability, with the aim of understanding the principle of inclusiveness in the broadest sense and of combating all forms of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes. It is not just a question of combating gender discrimination, but of overcoming multiple forms of discrimination, in the awareness that the different levels of exclusion and marginalization are intertwined and often overlap with each other.

A broad language must necessarily also be an accessible and understandable language, which can be clear and shared as much as possible by the community of people that speak and write.

Starting from gender

As underlined by the language guidelines of the Council of Europe:

"*A language that respects gender identity ensures equal treatment between women and men and does not perpetuate stereotypes linked to the perception of some roles as purely male or female. For the Italian language, the debate on the use of non-sexist language has been alive for some time now*."

In English, unlike Italian, there is a difference between "grammatical gender", "gender as a social construct" (which refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a certain time considers appropriate for men or women), and "sex" as a biological characteristic of living beings.

English has very few gender markers: pronouns and possessives (*he, she, her* and *his*); and some nouns and forms of address. Most English nouns do not have grammatical gender forms (*teacher, president*), whereas a few nouns are specifically masculine or feminine (*actor/actress, waiter/waitress*). Some nouns that once ended in *-man* now have neutral equivalents that are used to include both genders (*police officer* for *policeman/policewoman, spokesperson* for *spokesman, chair/chairperson* for *chairman*).

A challenge for gender-inclusive communication in English is the use of the masculine form by default. For example, "*Every Permanent Representative must submit* **his** *credentials to Protocol*."
Several strategies can be applied to be more gender respectful and inclusive:

1.   Use of non-discriminatory language:

When referring to or addressing specific individuals, use forms of address and pronouns that are consistent with their gender identity. There should also be consistency in the way women and men are referred to: if one is addressed by their name, last name, courtesy title, or profession, the other should be as well.
Example:

Instead of "Professor Rossi and Marta Verdi will attend the luncheon" (use of a first name when referring to a woman) please use "Professor Rossi and Professor Verdi will attend the luncheon" (surname and title for both).
Care should be taken to use the form of address preferred by everyone. However, when that preference is not known, precedence is given to Ms. over Mrs., as the former is more inclusive and can refer to any woman, regardless of marital status.

Avoid gender-biased expressions or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes.

Example: "She throws/runs/fights like a girl"; "Men just don't understand".

2.   Make gender visible when it is relevant for communication:

"**Pairing**" is the use of both feminine and masculine forms (he or she; her or his). It is a strategy that may be used when the author/speaker wants to explicitly make both women and men visible. **It is advisable not to overuse this strategy in English**, however, as it may be distracting to the reader, particularly in narrative texts.

When highlighting gender would make the sentence more inclusive two separate words can be used. This strategy should only be used when popular beliefs or preconceptions may obscure the presence or action of either gender.

Example:
"Boys and girls should attend the first tailoring class with their parents."
"All of the soldiers, both men and women, passed the last test."

3.   Do not make gender visible when it is irrelevant to the message being communicated:

- Use gander-neutral words.
  Example: "Humankind instead of mankind", "staff instead of manpower".

- Using plural pronouns/adjectives.
  Example: "A staff member in Germany earns more than one in Italy", instead of "A staff member in Germany earns more than he would in Italy".

- Use of the relative pronoun who.
  Example: "A member of staff who is not satisfied with the project management can ask for a meeting", instead of "If a member of staff is not satisfied with the project management, he can ask for a meeting".

- Use of a plural antecedent. When referring to generic subjects, plural antecedents may be used to avoid gendered pronouns.
  Example: "Researchers can apply to the call for abstracts if they already have results", instead of "A researcher can apply to the call for abstracts if he already has results".

- Omit the gendered word.
  Example: "Ask the Division Manager to continue efforts to apply to European funds", instead of "Ask the Division Manager to continue his/her efforts to apply for European funds".

- Use the passive voice. The passive voice is not an appropriate option for all sentences in English, as it often changes the emphasis of the sentence. However, it does offer an option for avoiding gendered constructions.
  Example: "The author of a paper must have direct knowledge of the research presented", instead of "The author of a paper must have direct knowledge of the research he/she is presenting".

Beyond gender, respecting all forms of diversity

By diversity we mean a set of peculiar aspects specific to each person that define their individuality. Diversity is a personal value to be protected, which also constitutes an enrichment for society, and not an obstacle to be overcome.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for the adoption of measures to combat stereotypes relating to disability; it is important to be careful and avoid using negative expressions or stigmatizing language.

By using, sometimes even unconsciously, inappropriate expressions or language that leaves room for prejudice, a situation of exclusion is created, and the foundations are laid for discriminatory communication. To ensure that the language used is as broad as possible, it is appropriate to avoid expressions that define, belittle, or exclude people for reasons of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious or other beliefs, ethnicity, social class, and physical or mental characteristics. When writing it is important to try and think about the whole audience for which the writing is intended, and it is useful to remember that the people who will read it will have different sensitivities.

- When it comes to relationships, the term "partner" is broader than others and reflects the variety of relationships existing within society (unmarried or same-gender couples, civil unions, de facto unions).

- Avoid using outdated terminology, particularly in reference to ethnicity or sexual orientation (use widely accepted and established terms such as "gay" or "homosexual" instead of others that could have an offensive or discriminatory meaning). Within the sphere of LGBTQI+ people (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual people), instead of referring for example to someone as "a transgender", it is appropriate to use expressions such as "transgender person".

- When referring to different nationalities and cultures, avoid generic statements that convey preconceptions and clichés referring to a person or a group ("the French are romantic" or "the Swiss are precise"). If you need to refer to a person's ethnic origin or nationality, it is important to be as specific as possible. Instead of a generic term such as "African", which encompasses a huge variety of people, it is advisable to use more specific terms that define nationality, such as "Egyptian", "Nigerian", "Somali" when possible. Likewise, the use of the term "Moroccan" to generically designate immigrants of various North African origins should be avoided.

- If you are concerned about using inappropriate language when referring to or speaking to someone who, for example, is of a different ethnicity, you may want to ask that person what they prefer to be called.

- Avoid making assumptions about a person's religion or beliefs. It is also important to remember that the word "Arab" designates a linguistic connotation, referring to people belonging to an Arabic-speaking population and is not synonymous with "Muslim", which instead designates a person of Islamic faith.

- Avoid using terms that identify the religious festivities of a single belief in official communications referring to holidays. It is preferable to use neutral formulas such as "Happy Holidays" rather than "Merry Christmas".

- Avoid perpetuating age stereotypes. It is important to use respectful expressions such as "senior colleagues" rather than adopting expressions that could lead to seniority being perceived as an undesirable status.

Visual communication

Images should also correspond to a broad and diversified language; in fact, it is often the visual message that attracts the public's attention more quickly and deeply. The representation of different aspects of diversity (gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, religious or other beliefs, sexual orientation, nationality) ensures that all people feel involved in the message.

Events, gender equality and diversity

When organizing scientific or educational events inside and outside CMCC, it is important to keep in mind the principles of gender balance and diversity. By gender balance we mean ensuring representation of each gender is approximately between 40% and 60%. In any case, the least represented gender should not feature less than 30% of the time. By diversity, we mean the inclusion in interventions and/or in the organization of events of people with diversified cultural and professional experiences, be they identity, social, geographical, ethnic, or other origin. In case there is a limited number of participants of the same gender, due to the nature and type of event, it is recommended to try to include other participants of the less represented gender in the discussion, to compensate for any imbalances.

Gender balance should be maintained in all roles relating to the organization of the event, from technical and support roles to those of greater prestige and visibility. Diversity should be protected and promoted by ensuring that interventions are carried out by people of different professional, cultural and geographical backgrounds, but also through the involvement of people of different levels of seniority at work and age.

Attention to gender equality and the representation of diversity can be highlighted both during the promotion of the event and during the opening phase, as values that the Foundation is actively committed to making its own. The use of broad language is recommended in both promotional materials for events and during events themselves, as they unfold. To ensure maximum accessibility to events, providing subtitles in the case of online events and/or simultaneous translations into different languages (including sign language) is recommended. For in-person events, it is necessary to verify whether there are barriers to access and provide support to ensure equal access to venues. Requesting whether any of the people attending events have special needs (whether they are associated with disabilities, allergies and food preferences, or other specific needs) is also recommended.

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