

# The key gender transformation of ESA

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Any organization is antisexist when it does not limit its actions to talk and write about the sexism of others but also takes a normative and active position against internal sexism. In the case of ESA, it happened in 2021. The approval of [Ethical Guideline 4 by the European Sociological Association \(ESA\)](#) was a pivotal moment for sociologists, particularly women in the field. This

guideline, established during the ESA conference in Barcelona under the leadership of Marta Soler and inspired by the #MeToo University movement, represented a firm stance against sexual harassment, revictimization, and isolating gender violence (under the name of second-order sexual harassment) within academic and professional settings.

This approval was not achieved without resistance. The proposal formally made by MeToo University wanted to receive support with the signature of many members of ESA, but only a minority signed. Then, in the general assembly, it was approved for 123 votes but it also received 8 negative votes and 20 abstentions. Even a few members were exerting isolating gender violence against the persons leading the initiative for being also the ones that had supported the victims and survivors.

For women sociologists, this guideline was a monumental step forward in ensuring their safety, dignity, and equality in the workplace. Historically, the field of sociology, like many other academic disciplines, had been male-dominated, with women often facing systemic barriers and discrimination. Sexual harassment had been one of the most pervasive issues, creating an environment of fear and exclusion for many women. By explicitly addressing and condemning these behaviors, Ethical Guideline 4 sent a clear message that such actions would no longer be tolerated.

Moreover, the guideline's inclusion of isolating gender violence, which refers to the retaliation or further victimization of those who reported harassment, was particularly important. It acknowledged the challenges victims faced when coming forward and sought to protect them from further harm. This protection was crucial for fostering an environment where all sociologists, regardless of gender, could conduct their work free from fear and discrimination.

The leadership of the president Marta Soler and the support of the ESA membership in approving this guideline reflected a broader commitment to justice and equality within sociology. It was a critical step towards creating a more inclusive and supportive academic community for all.