

## Comments on the ETH Board's Strategy for Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion 2025–2028

This position statement is written jointly by:

- ACIDE, *l'Association du corps intermédiaire de l'EPFL*
- PolyDoc, the EPFL PhD students' association
- EPDA, the EPFL postdocs' association

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We, as members of ACIDE, PolyDoc, and EPDA, representing PhD students, postdocs, and scientific staff at EPFL, appreciate the ETH Board's initiative to improve diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) in the ETH domain. However, we feel that the strategy only superficially addresses what a diverse and inclusive academic community could look like.

Two topics are left entirely unaddressed:

1. gender and sexuality beyond the binary, and
2. racial discrimination.

1. While the strategy makes many references to “gender balance”, it is always posed in starkly binary terms: “the share of women in education and in research”, “equal opportunities for women and men”, and so on. We do not deny the importance of creating more opportunities for women across the institute and we firmly believe there is still a long way to go for true equality. But the strategy never acknowledges the existence of non-binary people, nor the many other forms of gender- and sexuality-based bias faced by transgender people, gay/lesbian people, and others across the queer spectrum, all of whom are certainly a part of the EPFL community. The strategy does not seem “inclusive” towards those who do not see themselves adequately counted in the simplistic statistics about “women” and “men” used as metrics for EPFL's diversity goals. We would like to see the strategy explicitly address LGBTQ+ issues and treat gender-based measures with the nuance they deserve.
2. Moreover, we are disappointed to see how vague the strategy is about racial discrimination or racism. We understand EPFL's position that “race” is an ill-defined, unscientific concept, and that it thus does not make sense to talk about “race” as a criterion for discrimination; but racial discrimination exists in reality nonetheless, targeting aspects of perceived “race”, such as physical appearance, linguistic background, and ethnicity. EPFL should commit to explicitly identifying these factors that contribute to inequality and non-inclusivity in the community, collecting quantitative data (of which there is a severe paucity today, for any factors other than gender), and implementing targeted remedies for “race”-based disparities.

There are many other axes along which EPFL could be more inclusive and diverse, including but not limited to physical disabilities (ableism), neurodivergence, ageism, and lookism (unconscious bias towards physical attractiveness), but the two points above—gender and sexuality, and “race”—are where we offer our most actionable feedback. We hope it will be taken into consideration and we look forward to working with the EPFL administration to further DEI in our communities.

Sincerely,

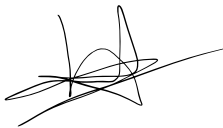
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