



newsletter

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Dear colleagues,

In this issue we are bringing you an overview of some of the activities of the National Contact Centre for Gender in Science carried out in the second half of 2017.

We are proud to announce that we launched three books in November and December 2017. We report about the first book *House Revolt: How Women Did Dissent* in our last newsletter 1/2017. Its launch took place on 17 November 2017, the hall was packed, out of 21, 19 respondents came.

The next book is a publication of interviews with men chemists at the University of Chemistry and Technology Prague on gender equality in science, *Dynamic Equilibrium in Easy Reach?* Interestingly, prejudice toward women in science prevail regardless of age, education and position.

Last but not least, the third book, launched in mid-December, is a result of four year implementation of a mentoring programme for early-career researchers. Katerina Cidlinska and Martina Fucimanova prepared a book of interviews with their mentors and mentees *Mentoring: Beyond the Manuals*, which offers a unique insight into the barriers and challenges early career researchers face in Czech public research and universities.

We are also proud to have seen Marcela Linkova elected the chair of the ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation, and Katerina Cidlinska elected the chair of eument-net.

On behalf of the Centre we wish you inspiring reading and Merry Christmas!

Nad'a Strakova and Marcela Linkova

BOOK LAUNCH: WOMEN IN CZECHOSLOVAK DISSIDENT MOVEMENT



On the day commemorating the change of the regime in Czechoslovakia, 17 November 2017, the book called *Bytová revolta: Jak ženy dělaly dissent* (*House Revolt: How Women Did Dissent*) was launched in the Lucerna Gallery. Of the 21 women presented in book 19 were present at the launch.

During her opening speech, Marcela Linkova of the Centre for Gender and Science, one of the co-editors and mastermind behind the book explained why the Centre team launched the project [Women in](#)

[dissent](#). “One of the first inspirations to document the work of women in the Czechoslovak dissident movement were my debates with art historian and dissident Vera Jirousova. She always maintained women played a big role in the dissident movement. Vera thought it unfair women dissidents are not as visible and known as men.”



Prof Eva Zazimalova, President of the Czech Academy of Sciences

“I am very proud of this book,” said Eva Zazimalová, the President of the Czech Academy of Sciences at the book launch. “Women may fear for their children more than men but I am convinced that women are also more patient and resilient than men,” said Eva Zazimalova. She thanked all women in dissent for what they did to achieve democracy in Czechoslovakia. Ivan M. Havel, brother of late president Vaclav Havel, said “women dissidents were not imprisoned as often as men dissidents because they were smarter.”

The book of interviews presents the experience of 21 women who stood up to the communist regime. Czechoslovak women dissidents were Charter 77 speakers, samizdat writers and smugglers, protest organizers, and most of them were also mothers and wives. They participated at every level of the dissident movement. There was no division between major and minor activities among the dissidents themselves. The book also examines the ways the State Police gendered persecution against them and what gendered ways the women employed against the oppressive regime.

January 2017 marked the 40th anniversary of Charter 77, a proclamation calling on the Czechoslovak government to comply with international human rights commitments it has signed up to in the Helsinki Final Act. As one journalist pointed out in his review of the book in the Lidove noviny daily: "It is a mystery, it is 28 years after the Velvet Revolution and no one has dealt with the issue of women in dissent yet."



Women dissidents and Charter 77 signatories (from left to right): Zdena Tominova, the second woman speaker of the Charter, Ivanka Lefevre, Iva Kotrla

The book *Bytova revolta* thus repays a debt to generations of brave and courageous women who needed to live in line with their conscience and stand up to the undemocratic regime. So far it has been received positive reviews in media.

The book will have been translated into English in the spring 2018 and published electronically.

BOOK LAUNCH OF DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM WITHIN EASY REACH? INTERVIEWS WITH CHEMISTS UCT PRAGUE ABOUT RESEARCH AND EQUALITY

Why are women underrepresented in the senior ranks of the University of Chemistry and Technology Prague (UCT)? Why is there a sharp drop at post/doctoral level? Are study and working conditions for women researchers at UCT fair and sufficient? Is there equality in science for both women and men? Blanka Nyklova and Hana Viznerova of the Centre for Gender and Science consulted these issues with men chemists of UCT Prague. The outcome of their research is a book of 20 interviews titled [*Dynamic Equilibrium Within Easy Reach? Interviews with Chemists UCT Prague*](#), which was launched 7 December 2017.



"We cannot conduct a gender research of work conditions by interviewing women only. It is highly necessary to interview all who are involved in the work environment," said Blanka Nyklova during her opening speech. The research showed that some prejudices against women in research prevail regardless generation and educational level. Therefore we cannot rely on the fact next generation will be less biased. A large number of men

consider the existing work conditions for women researchers to be sufficient.

One of the respondents, Jan Merna, said women researchers cannot pursue a scientific career without the support from their partners, co-workers and heads of departments. He himself went on vacation to help his wife with three children and to work part-time.

The publication of 20 interviews received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration and was part of the [TRIGGER](#) programme.

MENTORING: BEYOND THE MANUALS



A result of four year implementation of a mentoring programme for early-career researchers, Katerina Cidlinska and Martina Fucimanova prepared a book of interviews with their mentors and mentees and offer a unique insight into the barriers and challenges facing early career researchers in Czech public research and universities.

The book was written with three goals. One is to testify to the benefits of the mentoring programmes for junior researchers and to attract the interest of both researchers and managers of research institutions. The second is to outline the design of the mentoring programme run by the Centre for Gender & Science, and to inspire other institutions to launch such initiatives. The third is to address international mentoring programme coordinators, and perhaps start international collaboration which would give our and their mentees the opportunity to establish interesting and beneficial international contacts.

Although it is becoming increasingly challenging to launch a research career in the Czech Republic, Czech academic institutions rarely employ proactive HR policies. The responsibility for professional development of junior researchers is almost exclusively on the researchers themselves and their advisors. The generally accepted assumption is that proper researchers find all the necessary information themselves.

The interviews in this book show how our mentees deal with the changing conditions in research and how they manage their research careers. They share the issues and challenges they faced when they joined our programme, they evaluate their success in dealing with the challenges, and speak about the unexpected benefits they received.

We hope the book can be a source of inspiration for coordinators of mentoring programmes as well as for HR and career centre managers and academics in managing positions as well as national and international policy makers. The interviews discuss examples of good and bad practice in training junior researchers at different institutions and different fields. Anonymisation of interview data encouraged our mentees to speak very openly, which gives all these actors a unique opportunity to learn about opinions and concerns to which they may otherwise have a limited access.

The book is available for download [here](#).

MARCELA LINKOVA ELECTED THE CHAIR OF THE ERAC STANDING WORKING GROUP ON GENDER IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



On 18 October 2017 Marcela Linková, the head of the Centre for Gender and Science, was elected the chair of the ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (SWG GRI). The European Research and Innovation Advisory Committee ([ERAC](#)) gives advice to the Council, the Commission and Member States on research and innovation related to the European Research Area.

The SWG GRI builds on the work of the Commission's advisory group, the Helsinki Group on Gender for Research and Innovation, established in 1999.

KATERINA CIDLINSKA ELECTED THE CHAIR OF EUMENT-NET, EUROPEAN NETWORK OF MENTORING PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN IN RESEARCH

We are proud that our colleague Katerina Cidlinska, the coordinator of the Centre's mentoring programme for early career researchers, was elected the Chair of eument-net, a European network of mentoring programmes for women researchers at the General Assembly of the network. The General Assembly took place in Prague on 24 November 2017. The newly elected Executive Committee aims to strengthen cooperation, education and experience sharing and exchange.



eument-net Executive Committee (from left to right: Dagmar Höppl- Universität Stuttgart, Katerina Cidlinská – Centre for Gender and Science, Ekaterina Masetkina – Universität Düsseldorf and Olivia Och – Université de Genève)

2017 WOMEN'S CONGRESS: WOMEN AND PUBLIC SPACE



Women's Congress 2017 addressed women's right to access to and safety in public space as a public issue. Public space (both physical and online) is often believed to be gender neutral and open to all. Experience and research show that women's access to and safety in public space(s) continues to be affected by gender-specific limitations.

On the most general level, women who enter public space often face gender-based attacks, threats of violence and bullying.

Sexist ads abound on and offline. Due to gendered division of labour women and men move around and use public transport in cities differently; city planning and construction are perceived differently

by women and men in terms of safety. Although the topic has garnered steady attention in many cities abroad the issue of women in public space is a non-topic in the Czech Republic.



With approximately 450 participants and 15 NGOs contributing to the programme, the 2017 Women's Congress was a success. The topic of women's access to public space and women's safety (both online and in the streets) was set up as an important agenda and discussed with relevant stakeholders participating in the main discussion panels at the Women's Congress. We also managed to raise awareness regarding the topic among general public through effective promotion on social media

and through interviews in radio (Český rozhlas Plus, Czech Television).



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